The
SMART SET
A Magazine of Cleverness

Crystal Room of the Ritz-Carlton Hotel

THE RITZ-CARLTON NEW YORK

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ALBERT KELLER,
General Manager

Vol. LIV. APRIL, 1918 No. 4

The SMART SET

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CONTENTS

A CIGARETTE	Lawrence Vail	1
THE SUNSHINER (*complete novelette*)	Hugh Kahler	3
THE MISOGAMISTS CLUB	L. M. Hussey	25
THE SKY ROAD	Leslie Nelson Jennings	31
REST	Sara Teasdale	32
A HUMORESQUE IN HAM	Ben Hecht	33
REVENGE	Douglas Turney	43
NOCTURNE	Louis Untermeyer	50
REPORT OF A SUNDAY EVENING TALK AT A SANITORIUM FOR FEMALE ALCOHOLICS	Christopher Morley	51
UNMENTIONABLES (*essay*)	Owen Hatteras	53
DEFEAT	Harry Kemp	58
THE SWIMMING POOL	Evelyn Campbell	59
STRANGER	David Morton	61
THE DESIDERATE REPUTATION	Mifflin Crane	63
WHAT THERE IS	Morris Gilbert	68
SILENT, WHITE AND BEAUTIFUL	Tod Robbins	69
THE ADVENTURE OF THE BALD-HEADED MAN	E. B. Dewing	81
LOVE SONG	Muna Lee	88
HE WANTED IT	James Bennett	89
WATERLOO	June Gibson	90
GETTING UNMARRIED (*one-act play*)	Winthrop Parkhurst	91
THE MIRACULOUS IMAGE	Vincent Starrett	101
MR. CRANE WRITES A POEM	John Anderson	107
EPISODE BEHIND A SYNTHETIC PALM	George B. Jenkins, Jr.	111
THE DANGEROUS AGE	Grace Harlowe	112
THE FOOLS OF LOVE (*essay*)	Marian Cox	113
WANDERER	John McClure	120
THE MYSTERIOUS MRS. CARDEN	Thyra Samter Winslow	121
THE CRITIC	Margaret Cory Wells	124
WHEN GREEK MEETS GREEK	Maverick Terrell	125
THE BROADWAY DRAMATIC CRITICISM	George Jean Nathan	129
ERREUR N'EST PAS COMPTE (*in the French*)	Jean Vallier	137
BUSINESS	H. L. Mencken	138

AND

BURLESQUES, EPIGRAMS, POEMS, SHORT SATIRES, ETC.

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Issued Monthly by Smart Set Company, Inc., Printing Crafts Bldg.
Entered at New York Post Office as second class mail matter

Eltinge F. Warner, Pres. and Treas. George Jean Nathan, Sec.
Western Advertising Office, Westminster Bldg., Chicago, Ill.

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Vol. LIV. APRIL, 1918 No. 4

The SMART SET

The Aristocrat Among Magazines

A CIGARETTE

By Lawrence Vail

IN the corner of a grey street Conrad smoked a cigarette. The blue smoke rose drowsily into the wet air; the spark flashed more boldly than Venus on a clear night.

Conrad was waiting. He was not waiting for a woman, not even for a man. He was waiting only for something to happen.

Life blustered through the grey street in awkward, uneasy gusts. Her tragedians and comedians shuffled by—bungling their parts. It appeared to Conrad that the prompter must have fallen asleep. Or, perhaps, they were merely understudies. With a movement of his little finger he flicked the grey ash of his cigarette onto the grey pavement. He wondered whether he was an understudy for someone.

A limousine stopped in front of No. 16. A lady stepped forth into the wet night. A white mantle enfolded her from her throat to her ankles. She wore a white scorn from her curls to her toes. A grey dreariness filled her brain and her heart. Her soul spun around her like a famished cat around a bowl that had once contained a pint of warm milk.

She was thinking that a foreign gentleman had told her she had pretty feet. How thoughtful they were—these foreigners, how unlike Americans. At that moment she slipped on the peel of an orange. A mild cry of vexation broke from her. Conrad made an indefinite gesture to rescue her, then quickly restrained himself. The grey ash of his cigarette fell onto the grey pavement.

On the corner of the grey street Conrad smoked his cigarette. The spark seemed something greater than Jupiter and something less than a carrot. The blue smoke curved lazily towards grey heaven. It appeared to have little ambition to reach heaven.

Life blustered along—uneasily, awkwardly. A child wept because her doll was broken. A drunkard stumbled, shouting, as he passed, an obscene

ditty. A policeman looked at his broad-toed boots. A newsboy ran, scattering the news of the day. Two women talked ribbons and bargains and imagined they were happy. A poet blew his nose surreptitiously and imagined he was sad. A shop girl stopped to pull up her stocking.

A woman with a sad mouth and gay heels to her shoes smiled at Conrad. Her glance seemed a live wire drawing him to a new little world. Two fat women looked at him and laughed; he found himself—he knew not why—thinking of soup. A man with a black overcoat and a depressingly straight back solemnly asked him the hour. With a movement of his little finger Conrad flicked the grey ash of his cigarette onto the gray pavement.

The woman with the sad mouth returned and laughed at him. Her gay heels made a gay din on the pavement. He had the feeling that he had followed her into a new little world, that it had become a shabby old little world, and that he was saying good-bye to her. She seemed to understand and moved on rapidly.

A drop of rain fell from the sky and made a black stain on the pavement.

"The scribe of the Gods," thought Conrad, "is shaking his pen. Poor fellow! What else can he do? And what could he write? There is surely nothing in heaven to write about."

Conrad smiled. He thought himself very clever.

With a movement of his little finger Conrad flicked the grey ash of his cigarette onto the grey pavement. More rain drops fell.

"The scribe of the Gods is growing desperate," thought Conrad. "How foolish of him!"

And he laughed.

A girl passed and opened her umbrella. The wind blew against her, outlining her little sharp knees. A spinster had trouble with her long skirt; she lifted it, showing a rough woolen stocking. Conrad scratched his back.

Conrad's cigarette tasted hot against his lips. He threw it away. It shone on the pavement like a sentimental morsel of sunset. More raindrops fell. Umbrellas floated awkwardly along the grey street like swollen, bourgeois balloons. The rain played on them like little twigs on a drum.

Of a sudden a large drop of rain fell on the spark of Conrad's cigarette. There was a sound like that of a baby snake hissing.

Life blustered through the street in awkward, uneasy gusts. Conrad's cigarette had come to the end of its life. And Conrad was older.

WHEN a man decides he is sensible enough to select a wife he is too old for the frivolous maidens he would like to marry.

A MAN'S first love is always his most perfect. This is because he has no other loves to compare it with.

THE SUNSHINER

By Hugh Kahler

I

DINNER had gone its ways. In the wide, flower-fragrant ballrooms youths and maidens danced dutifully to the strains of a Tzigane quartette, perspiring manfully behind a screen of palms through which pulsated horrendous syncopations in proof of the power of money to corrupt even a genuine Tzigane. Everything was impeccably correct—dinner, decorations, music, dress. The girls wore delicately tinted frocks, low of throat and high of hem, flaring petalwise from modishly slender hips. Their partners gave the impression of a group photograph in *The Haberdasher*—beautifully clad, sleek-haired, short-moustached.

At first impression the atmosphere of pleasure was convincing enough, but on closer acquaintance one felt the want of that indescribable element of assurance, of conscious unconsciousness which distinguishes the genuine from the would-be in matters social. There was to be seen in the faces of the dancers a certain tensity of feature, a peculiar, half-pathetic eagerness to do the correct thing in the correct fashion for sheer correctness' sake. They lacked, in short, the aplomb of the manor-born. The sincere climber is not without an appeal to the sympathies. Mrs. Trevor Todd had not quite arrived; her guests belonged, roughly, in the same twilight zone which fringes the inner circle. Like her they were engaged in worming a passage through the impalpable barriers which still excluded them. Except for this they were estimable people, with rather more money than they needed.

Two exceptions must be noted. There were present, as guests, two people utterly free of social ambition, entirely without the anxieties which characterized the rest.

One of these, Bayard Averey Ellyott already endowed with all that these others thirsted for by virtue of his distaff descent from the Avereys-with-an-e, represented a distinct triumph on the part of his hostess and his presence under her roof was at this moment affording her a sublimated satisfaction, a fact of which Ellyott himself was thoroughly aware. It was, indeed, to engender exactly that emotion that he had come.

The other exception, Mary Lester, was present for reasons wholly mercenary, to be discussed in due course. It is with Ellyott that we are primarily concerned, for it was upon this occasion that he made the momentous discovery which was to alter his entire fabric of existence.

By a kind of feeble survival of *le droit du seigneur,* the comeliest of the aspiring peasant maidens had fallen to his lot. The gracious visitor from the loftier strata must be given of the best, as travelling royalty. Mrs. Todd, reluctantly crucifying maternal prejudice and ambition, had assigned her daughter to a quite commonplace steel person of very recent origin and placed at the side of her guest of honor one Gertrude Hemenway, whose superficial endowments might be confidently expected to impact agreeably upon the most aristocratic of optic nerves.

Herein Mrs. Todd had unwittingly followed the example of sundry other hostesses of her type. It is not improb-

able that this tendency on the part of the dowagers whom he favored with his condescending magnificence to reserve for his delectation the best available entertainment had some unconscious influence upon Ellyott. He had a connoisseur's eye for beauty, and it is conclusive proof of Nature's feminine want of logic that the lower classes frequently produce types of pulchritude which one would not expect to find save in the most exalted stations. Per contra, princesses—but why taunt royalty with an unmerited misfortune?

Ellyott had dined in eye-soothing proximity to the Hemenway radiance. Now, calm in possession, he sat beside the lady in a snug, secluded angle of the alcove which did service as a conservatory. His privacy had been respected sedulously; no prying intruder had ventured to follow, though more than one wistful glance had been directed at them as they strolled across the ballroom to reach this refuge.

Ellyott, at this stage, was exceedingly content. No hint of disillusion had come to him. Conversation, however, had already exhausted the possibilities of the decorations, the music and the dinner, and proceeded, now, in spasmodic jerks. Ellyott played a well-tried trump. He leaned toward Miss Hemenway, an expression of benignity adorning his countenance.

"I'm sorry you happened to fall into this set when you came to New York," he said. "I've run into you several times at such places as this—places where you are as much out of your proper element as I am. You don't belong with this crowd, at all, and you must be getting a rotten impression of New York society from them."

The girl surveyed him with a suddenly revived interest. "You mean Mrs. Todd?" she asked, her tone curiously flat. He waved an inclusive arm.

"Mrs. Todd and her type, yes—they—they're not the real thing, you know, though they try hard to convey that impression. New riches have a persistent, lingering perfume." He sniffed delicately, with a deprecating smile. Her eyes narrowed a little.

"I see your attitude. I suppose there are—rough edges about most of us who haven't been predestined to this sort of thing by three or four generations of it—edges invisible to us but pathetically obvious to—to you, for instance." Her tone was queerly unenthusiastic, but Ellyott failed to notice it.

"Exactly," he beamed. "They deceive each other, but never the eye which is trained from birth to recognize the real thing. 'You can fool a man with a stuffed dog, but not a dog,' you know." He smacked his lips on the quotation. She studied him with a glint of amusement at the corners of her mouth.

"Admirably expressed," she approved. Her eyes hardened a little. "But you—you come to such places, yourself. I've seen you a dozen times at houses more or less like this. Why? Does it amuse you to watch us? A kind of refined slumming? I think that's rather cruel of you, Mr. Ellyott. I'm not sure I like that spirit."

Ellyott flushed. The injustice of this interpretation stung him to a defensive candor which a sober discretion would have avoided.

"No—you mustn't think that!" he cried. "It's the exact opposite of that which brings me—really."

"I don't understand, I'm afraid."

"They're so glad to have me," he exclaimed. "It gives them so much innocent enjoyment to have one of the—to have someone like me accept their invitations. They simply beam at me when I come—they remember it long afterward—they even boast about it among themselves. Mrs. Todd, for example—perhaps you observed her at dinner. She hardly took her eyes from me—I could see her swelling up with it. It's so with all of them—and—"

Miss Hemenway laughed softly. "*'Ce que moi coute si peu—'*" she quoted daringly. "I understand. You—you're a philanthropist, then, Mr. Ellyott? You love your fellow-men, like Abou ben Adhem. It's—it's downright

noble of you—to shun the society of your own kind and come down to this level! A self-sacrifice—"

"No." He flushed uneasily. "I'm really selfish. It's my own happiness that brings me, not theirs. You see I've discovered the real secret of happiness—long ago. It's a purely reflective thing. The man who thinks only of his own content is endlessly gratifying ambitions only to discover that realization is disappointing. We achieve happiness only by giving it to others—it sounds like a pious platitude, but it's sober fact. It is gained only by indirection. Think of the happy people you know, and you'll admit that every one of them is constantly trying to make others happy. These people here, each intent on his own gratification—is one of them happy? Look at their faces and you have your answer!"

She stared. "There's truth in that. But it demands a degree of unselfishness—"

"Not at all. Selfishness carried to its logical extreme—no more. If it made me happy to cut our friend Mrs. Todd tomorrow, I'd do it. But it would only make me feel, in reflection, her own disappointment. Whereas, being pleasant to her, I get an inducted current of content out of all proportion to hers. There's no fun for me in going about to the Van der Donks' and the Schuylers'—they aren't in the least uplifted by it. But here—or at Mrs. Gallagher's, or the Pillsons'—do you see it now?"

Her level scrutiny puzzled him a bit. He could not read her eyes.

"A novel philosophy, Mr. Ellyott," she said dryly, after a pause. "How did you discover it?"

"Oh, at college, I fancy. I went down with a crowd from Groton, you see—fellows I'd always known. Naturally I joined their fraternity—would have kept right on mixing with them through the course, but it bored me, after a bit. I was tired of them, you see. So I began seeing something of the barbs—the chaps that don't belong to fraternities, you know. Fellows that go in for high marks and that sort of thing. They were pleased—they couldn't help showing it. Natural enough. I belonged in the crowd they envied; it tickled their vanity to have me knock about with them. And I found that it made me feel happy, too. So I gradually worked out the rule for myself." He laughed, self-consciously, as one who mentions an honorable achievement. "They called me 'Sunshine' at college. Rather a neat name, that, eh?"

"Very apt indeed. And when you graduated?" Her voice was still curiously devoid of emotion.

"Oh, the rest of the crowd went in for the usual sort of thing—polo and golf and tennis, yachting and hunting, bridge and poker at the clubs, dinners and dances and teas and receptions with their own narrow little set. It all bored me frightfully. So I hit on this sort of amusement. It's worked out very well. The other chaps are sick of themselves—I'm keen, eager, happy. They don't know the combination—I do. That's all."

"I see. And when I tell you that you have given me an exquisite pleasure in telling me of this, your own pleasure will repay you for the humiliations—the condescensions—?"

"Oh, please! You know that I have been quite normally happy in this glimpse of you. You own a mirror, Miss Hemenway—"

She clapped her hands softly. "The very thing!" she cried, her eyes dancing. He surveyed her expectantly, puzzled at the sudden change of tone. "If you really get your happiness by reflection, Mr. Ellyott, I can tell you how to be happier than you've ever been in your life. I owe you the suggestion for—for the pleasure you've given me tonight. Do you care to hear it?"

"Of course."

She hesitated, as if at a loss for her beginning. "You see," she said at last, "the pleasure your interest affords a girl—a girl who—who owns a mirror, as you put it, is not wholly unfamiliar to her. I—I am rather accustomed, for instance, to find men more or less attracted to me. That is perhaps not

maidenly to say, but we are being quite frank, you and I. If your interest charms me, who am not wholly new to masculine attentions, imagine what it would mean to some girl who has had no such experience—to a wall-flower like—like Mabel Denny, for instance. Do you realize how starved such girls are for a crumb of even superficial gallantry? Why not experiment along that line—shed your sunshine in the dark corners instead of on people who are already standing in—well, in twilight, let us say?"

Ellyott's normal masculine instinct recoiled instantly from the suggestion. He had, at this stage of his development, a thoroughly conventional idea of feminine charm and a no less commonplace taste for the superficial allure which, if but skin-deep, is deep enough for an eye which has no cathodic powers of penetration. But, even in that first moment, the idea took hold upon him, gripped him firmly.

Habit is an insidious thing, and the sunshine hunger had already struck deep.

He glanced again at Gertrude Hemenway.

She was undeniably beautiful, eye-filling, and yet—and yet, there was something wanting in his satisfaction.

He realized suddenly what it was; she had herself expressed it. He was a novelty to her only in degree; the attendance of lesser cavaliers had dulled the edge of her capacity for thrilling to his own; she was in a measure hardened. Her response, therefore, fell short of the exquisitely obvious delight in which he took his keenest satisfaction. Her proposal held possibilities—he admitted as much. Yet he was reluctant. She aided his decision by rising.

"Come, let's go back. I feel suddenly guilty at having monopolized you so long. I want you to see for yourself if I'm not right—"

"But you—" he persisted, "I can't see—"

"Let me have my share of reflected happiness, too," she whispered, laying a pleading hand against his lapel, her agreeable comeliness intensified by a sudden sanctifying softness of appeal. "I shall feel that those others owe their pleasure to me—for giving you up to them."

He saw the logic of this. With a dawning sense of the explorer who nears his great discovery, he followed her out to the dance-floor. A personable young nobody, recently risen from the mire on a boom in munitions stock, appeared suddenly to take Miss Hemenway from him. She cast him a curious smile over her shoulder as she merged in the flock of dancers. He followed the direction of her eyes.

Against the wall, a study in forlorn solitude, sat Mary Lester, as unalluring to the eye as Miss Hemenway was charming. Her mousey hair, uncompromisingly straight and dull, was drawn back tight, seeming to strain the skin of her brow and cheek; her sallow complexion was unredeemed by kindly cosmetic; her mouth, too large for her face, wore the fixed smile of one who stubbornly feigns amusement. Her shoulders were rounded into a concavity almost semicircular, with the flat line of her chest for its chord; her collar-bone obtruded itself on the eye with something akin to indecency. Hands rather too generous in their proportions lay ungracefully in her lap.

She caught Ellyott's eye and bowed, a shade too eagerly. He felt a sudden irresistible thrall of pity, as if a homeless, unlovely mongrel had flattened appealingly at his feet. He went straight to her. After all, he reflected, she belonged to his own world. Socially there was no condescension here. So much the better; it was a sterner test of Miss Hemenway's theory than he had contemplated.

"Hello, Mary." He sat beside her casually, conscious of a bond of sympathetic aristocracy. "What are you doing in this—*elevator?*"

She smiled crookedly, accenting the hopeless ugliness of her mouth by a glimpse of uneven teeth. "Earning my keep, of course. I paint Mrs. Todd's

portrait for five hundred dollars. I throw in my presence at her next affair. It's selling my birthright, I suppose, but I believe there's a biblical precedent for that, provided one's sufficiently hungry. These people like the notion of hiring Mary Lester to paint 'em. Naive souls—no harm in the lot. One must live."

He remembered now that the Lester money had gone in the flurry which followed the first few days of the war. There had never been too much of it, but the slump caught old Peter long of a choice collection of things which promptly collapsed. Probably the smash had hastened old Peter's apoplectic exit and his daughter's need to support herself. She had always dabbled in paint, he recalled. Born spinsters usually choose some such hobby. Poor Mary!

"So you've gone in for that sort of thing, eh?" He rubbed his chin, a little embarrassed. He did not know quite what to say to people who had lost their aristocratic idleness.

"Yes, that accounts for me. But you, Bayard—what explains your membership in the Climbers' Own? And Mrs. Van der Donk's excruciating dinner-dance in full swing at this very instant, too. You puzzle me."

He dissembled instinctively. Something warned him against a repetition of his frankness here. "Oh, I like this sort of thing. I fancy I'm bored with the other crowd and need a change of air."

She glanced keenly at him. "That was a frightfully good-looking girl with you," she remarked, irrelevantly. He glanced away from her to Gertrude Hemenway, visible for an instant in the colorful bevy on the floor.

"Very," he agreed, shortly. He began to be acutely discontented. It pained him to contemplate Mary Lester at such close range; she was more ghastly in her unloveliness than he had realized. More, he was conscious that his society afforded her at best a mild and temperate pleasure. He moved uneasily in his chair. She smiled again, a twisted, wry grin which affected him with something like the repulsion fabulously attributed to Medusa's victims.

"Run along and cut in again, then," she commanded. "He's had her long enough."

He brightened in spite of himself at the idea. Then he remembered his manners. Noblesse oblige! He could not stalk cavalierly away from Mary, leaving her unattended. Unless someone rescued him he was chained to her side indefinitely. She read his thought.

"Nonsense—don't mind me. I like being alone—looking on suits me better than action. I'd rather, really."

He rose with alacrity. "I think I will, then. It's nice of you to—to suggest it." A sudden thought pointed out a quid pro quo. "I—I wonder if you'd care to paint me," he said, almost shyly. "I've been intending to have it done. Would you?"

She studied him quizzically. "'Nice Mary,'" she mimicked, "'Here's a pretty stick of candy for you'—" her tone changed. "Never mind the pay, Bayard. I'm naturally good-hearted."

He flushed. "I mean it. I want a portrait for Aunt Selma—she's keen for it. Why shouldn't you do it? It's a business proposition with you, isn't it?"

She eyed him narrowly but he bore the scrutiny well. "All right," she assented, carelessly. "I've a studio in Washington Place—my name's in the telephone-book. Ring me up and we'll arrange a sitting."

He beamed with his restored consciousness of beneficence. "Why not do that now?"

"Very well. Come at two, on Thursday. Now run along and play with your pretty little friend."

He grinned and turned away. The theory had broken down, to be sure, but there was some salvage. If Mary Lester had failed to exhibit any symptoms of ecstatic delight in his condescension, he had nevertheless contrived to force a financial gleam of sunlight into her cheerless lot. Poor Mary! It came upon him that, as a portrait painter, her perceptions must be extraordinarily acute in the matter of her own facial defects. He was very sorry for her, even

maidenly to say, but we are being quite frank, you and I. If your interest charms me, who am not wholly new to masculine attentions, imagine what it would mean to some girl who has had no such experience—to a wall-flower like—like Mabel Denny, for instance. Do you realize how starved such girls are for a crumb of even superficial gallantry? Why not experiment along that line—shed your sunshine in the dark corners instead of on people who are already standing in—well, in twilight, let us say?"

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"Very," he agreed, shortly. He began to be acutely discontented. It pained him to contemplate Mary Lester at such close range; she was more ghastly in her unloveliness than he had realized. More, he was conscious that his society afforded her at best a mild and temperate pleasure. He moved uneasily in his chair. She smiled again, a twisted, wry grin which affected him with something like the repulsion fabulously attributed to Medusa's victims.

"Run along and cut in again, then," she commanded. "He's had her long enough."

He brightened in spite of himself at the idea. Then he remembered his manners. Noblesse oblige! He could not stalk cavalierly away from Mary, leaving her unattended. Unless someone rescued him he was chained to her side indefinitely. She read his thought.

"Nonsense—don't mind me. I like being alone—looking on suits me better than action. I'd rather, really."

He rose with alacrity. "I think I will, then. It's nice of you to—to suggest it." A sudden thought pointed out a quid pro quo. "I—I wonder if you'd care to paint me," he said, almost shyly. "I've been intending to have it done. Would you?"

She studied him quizzically. "'Nice Mary,'" she mimicked, "'Here's a pretty stick of candy for you'—" her tone changed. "Never mind the pay, Bayard. I'm naturally good-hearted."

He flushed. "I mean it. I want a portrait for Aunt Selma—she's keen for it. Why shouldn't you do it? It's a business proposition with you, isn't it?"

She eyed him narrowly but he bore the scrutiny well. "All right," she assented, carelessly. "I've a studio in Washington Place—my name's in the telephone-book. Ring me up and we'll arrange a sitting."

He beamed with his restored consciousness of beneficence. "Why not do that now?"

"Very well. Come at two, on Thursday. Now run along and play with your pretty little friend."

He grinned and turned away. The theory had broken down, to be sure, but there was some salvage. If Mary Lester had failed to exhibit any symptoms of ecstatic delight in his condescension, he had nevertheless contrived to force a financial gleam of sunlight into her cheerless lot. Poor Mary! It came upon him that, as a portrait painter, her perceptions must be extraordinarily acute in the matter of her own facial defects. He was very sorry for her, even

though she had not risen to the lure of him as one in her state should have done.

He circled the edge of the dancing-space, seeking Miss Hemenway's pale-green frock. At last he glimpsed it and, avoiding collisions at the cost of some agility of foot, slipped across toward her. Just as she reached the doorway beside which Mary Lester sat, however, he saw her check her partner and draw him out of the dance toward the exit. He quickened his step and overtook the pair as they came to Mary's side.

"May I have the rest of this?" He bowed a little stiffly, conscious of a certain sacrifice of dignity in entering into a palpable rivalry with a person so patently impossible as the munitions-made parvenu. Miss Hemenway hesitated a moment.

"I wish you'd test my theory," she said, smiling.

"I *have* tested it—it's not sound." He stood his ground.

"One little trial!" she reproved. "Give it a fair chance. Please! Try again."

He was vaguely irritated by her insistence, by a baffling consciousness that he was outside of something unidentified, by the peculiarly displeasing smile with which the munitions person regarded him. He repeated his bow, more formally than before, and turned away.

He did not hear a low-voiced speech which followed him. Had he caught the words he would not have dreamed of applying them to himself. But Mary Lester, an interesting witness of the tableau, heard perfectly. And she was thoroughly aware of the identity of the person spitefully declared by the Hemenway beauty to be the most tiresome, priggish snob of her acquaintance.

There was a touch of sympathy in the twisted, fixed smile with which she watched Mr. Bayard Ellyott on his march around the dancers, and it deepened as she saw him pause before another wall-ornament, a fat, florid, white-eyelashed girl whom she recognized as Evalene Mellick, a distant and somewhat encumbering connection of Mrs. Trevor Todd's.

"Poor Bayard," she pitied, inwardly.

It is the fate of humanitarians to be misunderstood. Not even the blood of the Avereys-with-an-e affords protection against it.

II

One circuit of the room sufficed to convince Ellyott that Miss Mellick's belief in her ability to dance was built on foundations as unsubstantial as her own were massively solid. His insteps ached as he limped with her toward the wide curve of the stairway, but a keen thrill of triumph pervaded the rest of his being, notwithstanding. In his few moments' experience with Evalene Mellick he had found a clear vision at last, and the future gleamed gloriously before him.

From the first sign of his interest in her the large young person's joy had been artlessly patent. Her acceptance of his suggestion that they dance had been tremulous with awed delight; her countenance, as he had struggled to pilot her about the floor, had beamed sunwise on him and all the world; her eyes swam in a superfluity of moisture which threatened actual tears of satisfaction. And in the glow of her gratitude and her bliss, Ellyott basked with the sensuous pleasure of the cat on the hearth-rug. His soul flowered. expanded. The Hemenway girl had been gloriously right, after all! It was such starved lives as this which would yield him the greatest harvest of vicarious joy!

He thrilled to discovery like Cortes, mendaciously located by the poet as speechless upon a peak in Darien—which Cortes, of course, never saw.

They sat on the stairs. It seemed to Ellyott that the wide marble step sagged perceptibly under Miss Mellick. In the posture enforced by her seat she expanded laterally in startling fashion; the exertion of the dance had visibly dampened her face and tiny beads of moisture gleamed from her cheeks and her upper lip.

"That was fine," he lied easily, with a wave toward the dancers. She beamed. "But this is nicer, isn't it," he concluded, significantly. The beam deepened to a glow. "Two is always better company than thirty," he persevered. Glow gave way to radiance horrifically dazzling. He saw straight into the girl's soul and the spectacle of her sublimated bliss in these deliciously unwonted tributes set up within him such a warmth of reflexive pleasure as he had not known since the day when he had asked Dibbick, the frowsiest grind in his class, to address him as "By."

"We must have a dance quite to ourselves," he went on, smoothly. "We could have no end of fun at some such place as The Midnight Gambols, for instance. Would you dare go there with me, sometime?"

"I'd adore it," breathed Miss Mellick, thickly, all but beyond the powers of speech.

"We'll go, then," he promised. "I'll ring you up about it."

"You—you're terribly nice to me." She smiled. He realized, with a vague resentment, that her teeth were perfect. While, even, regular, they affected him as a late-detected flaw in a jewel afflicts the collector. He studied her more closely, and was reassured. Not even the excellence of her dental equipment could greatly dim the splendor of her general ugliness. But the flaw was there, nevertheless.

He chatted with her, proceeding amiably from one commonplace banality of compliment to the next, charmed by the obvious rejoicing with which she received these effortless tributes, until her aunt, swooping upon them with the monumental coyness which curses so many ponderous ladies, bore him, an unwilling captive, to be paraded before envious dowagers whose houses, as yet, knew him not.

He was so intent upon his irradiations of light that he did not notice Mary Lester when she passed, and so missed the spectacle of her far-superior homeliness, and the curious, half-amused, half-sorrowful smile with which she surveyed him.

He made his escape as soon as he could from Mrs. Todd's enthusiasm, and, striding down the Avenue, glanced at his watch to discover that it wanted almost an half-hour of eleven. There is a theory commonly current to the effect that bright moments fly fast; nothing was ever more diametrically opposite to the fact. It is the dull hours which, seen in retrospect, are condensed, the happy ones which memory protracts, lingeringly.

He turned mechanically toward the club at which he lived, but the notion of bed was vaguely unpleasant. He was busy with his new conception of the art of sunshine-scattering. It seemed impossible, now, that he had never realized the vast opportunities for reflected happiness lying untouched in the starved, loveless lives of the sisterhood of the unbeautiful. He laughed, now, at the folly of struggling to brighten existences already comfortably roseate with the radiance of lesser luminaries; his device of exuding joy on struggling climbers seemed childish in its inadequacy. He thrilled at the realization that for every passably handsome woman there are a score of downright ugly ones. In Manhattan alone the number of hearts which his lightest smile could expand to the bursting-point must run into the millions.

Life gleamed joyously before him.

He had found himself at last.

The sunshiner was come into his kingdom.

There is an insidious plausibility about reversed axioms. The essential shallowness of superficial charm, for instance, is easily made to argue an invariable want of charm below the outer layer of cuticle, and the possibility that many a homely exterior belies a beautiful soul can easily be warped to attribute inner loveliness to all who are cursed with outward lack of it.

It seemed to Ellyott, in the flush of his new vision, that the ugliness of a woman's person indicated in direct ratio the beauty of her character, her

real charm. And, as perverted virtue outsins vice, so his sound taste, touched with the depravity of his self-delusion, forsook his old standards instantaneously.

He had been a worshipper of beauty as men count it; in the shock of his new understanding he saw ugliness as the ideal and became, from that moment, a self-elected apostle to the unlovely!

Thus the memory of Evalene Mellick was able to stir in him much the same reminiscent glow which the recollection of Gertrude Hemenway was at that moment inspiring in the more primitive bosom of the munitions millionaire.

His fancy dwelt lovingly upon her manifold perfections of ugliness—her white-lashed eyes, dankly blue, her beaded upper-lip, her generously shapeless contours, in the same fond fashion wherewith the normal swain catalogs his lady's positive charms. He thought of the pleasure in store for him when he should initiate her, avid neophyte, to the joys of the Four-O'clock-Frolics. He was light-headed with the notion as he neared the sedate, side-street portal of his club, overflowing with an expansive geniality toward all men.

In this mood he caromed violently from the person of Major Bellflower, one of the inevitable mistakes of a humanly fallible committee, whom, ordinarily, he avoided like a pestilence.

The Major—the origin of title was shrouded in the misty obscurity of the Boer War—wore a predatory mask of a face, rather too frankly marked with the scars of a lifelong warfare upon strong waters. He was to be seen in the company of those whom most of the other members sedulously shunned—in public at least. He had a taste for over-much salt in his anecdote, for publicity in his diversions, for frankness on the part of the ladies whom he delighted to entertain.

Normally Ellyott would have apologized quickly and slipped by him, but now, in the flush of his benevolence, his amiability found room even for Major Bellflower. He greeted him almost hilariously. The Major stared, incredulous at first, then with patent gratification, which stimulated the ardent sunshiner to further intimacies. In the end the Major half-timidly suggested that his present errand would be the better for an ally. Ellyott accepted fatuously, in the mood for reckless gayety by way of celebration, without inquiring overclosely into the nature of the foray and its objectives.

Piloted by Bellflower he found himself presently in one of those noisome backwaters of grime and gloom which lead to the stage-doors of all American theaters as invariably as though some sainted canon of dramatic art demanded it. A single, forlorn incandescent exuded a watery glimmer on uneven flags, coated with an inch of November slime, on grimy blank-walls, a doorway guarded by a frowsy, unshaven individual in dirty pink suspenders, who surveyed the visitors with passive hostility and resumed a foul-smelling pipe.

Ellyott, who had the natural instinct of his class for meticulous cleanliness, began to lose his taste for the adventure, but the Major had evidently learned to time his arrival with a certain nice accuracy. After a few groups of cheaply-flashy girls had passed them, eyeing them deliberately, Bellflower stepped quickly forward to greet a tall, lissome person whose raiment palpably traced its origin to the pleasant shops of the upper Avenue and whose countenance wore an expression of slightly-wearied indifference which would have done credit to a fictional countess. Ellyott acknowledged her claim to a certain type of beauty impersonally, without a flicker of envy for Bellflower, who plainly stood upon terms of some intimacy. He had lost his interest in beautiful women, even when their lure was enhanced by the adventitiously fascinating element of doubt as to behavior. But his waning enthusiasm woke instantly when the tall girl turned and presented him languidly to a retainer.

Myrtle Flaubert—pronounced phonetically as Flawburt—impacted upon his vision with the sudden splendor of an August meteor. The blasé patroness

in whose train she followed had chosen her cunningly; the contrast between the willowy slenderness of the one and the stumpy rotundity of the other could hardly have been better calculated. The ancient wile of the wistful beauty is deathless; on the very threshold of the millennium our remote posterity will observe the inevitable foil, the animate background.

But Ellyott had no thought of design, as he struggled with the stupefying perfection of unbeautifulness confronting him in the diluted glimmer of the bulb overhead; the memory of Evalene Mellick dimmed, faded. Man, we are assured, is essentially faithless. Ellyott proved the rule, despite his reversal of the processes on which it has been promulgated. Ardently devoted to appealing homeliness, his masculine fickleness compelled the instant abandonment of the old charmer when face to face with the new.

Sunshine still motivated his thought. He told himself that here was a life compared to which Miss Mellick's existence was sheer bliss; here was a need of him which overruled Evalene's imperiously. Here was a woman who would yield a hundredfold return for every trifling gallantry, who would refract, with the reconcentration of a parabolic mirror every least irradiation of his smile. It was to cheer and bless and brighten a barren bleakly drab existence, he assured himself, that he yearned to cultivate this girl's acquaintance.

He was self-deceived.

Already he had abandoned the circuitous route to ugliness and come to prize it for its own sake. He was beginning to manifest, indeed, all the instincts of a connoisseur in it, as he had once impersonally appraised beauty.

He came to his senses with a realization that the girl faced him with a touch of apologetic timidity, as if to say: "I know it's a shoddy trick they've put up on you, old chap, but even an awful thing like me gets hungry and thirsty sometimes, you know." He stepped forward with the courtly deference of a cavalier.

"I'm charmed," he said, with a heartiness born of sincerity. "Charmed!"

"It's vurry nice of you to say so," said Miss Flaubert, cautiously. They followed the Major and the lissome person to a providential taxi. As it jolted over perennially torn-up asphalt, conversation languished, but Ellyott found occasion, thanks to recurrent arc-lights, to confirm his earlier impressions. Miss Flaubert was a poem in exquisite, pluperfect ugliness. He felt a twinge of gratitude toward Bellflower, to whom he owed this happy chance. He would pay the check, he decided. Crammed into a niggardly square yard of floor-space at the rococo palace of exotic victual and vintage the Major's fancy had elected, he lightly proclaimed this intention. The Major submitted with a gracefulness verging upon alacrity. The lissome person favored him with an appraising stare.

"The first offense, for him," she decided. "And the last. The sky'll do for the limit."

Aloud she said precisely: "That's frightfully sweet of you, Mr.—er—I don't care for a thing except a bit of that guinea-hen and a salad and a Biscuit Tortoni afterward."

She hesitated.

Reassured by Ellyott's unmoved countenance, she languidly reversed the card, glanced wearily at the marginal indexes and declared for a vintage at which the Major's brows rose almost to his low-growing hair.

Ellyott remained calm. It was clear to him that not even the fêted fair normally supped thus. He was, therefore, brightening appreciably her relatively pleasant lot, to say nothing of the joy the wine would bring to Bellflower's sophisticated palate; as for the humble retainer, her shining eyes were eloquent of the effect which this foretaste of magnificence was having upon her.

Ellyott had the virtues of his defects. Supremely selfish as only the superficially unselfish can be, he was still guiltless of that meanness which counts petty costs and rolls a niggardly eye at the red-ink figures of the addition.

There was, indeed, a glimmer of genuine generosity in him, which enabled him to extract a separate and unalloyed pleasure from the visible enjoyment of his guests.

They ate, after an interminable wait beguiled by carefully uttered bromides from the beautiful blonde in the choicest of Rialto English, and infrequent giggles on the part of Miss Flaubert. They finished the bottle. Ellyott observed Miss Flaubert's attitude toward this feature of his entertainment with a pitying amusement. She patently strove to enjoy it in proportion to its cost, yet wondered, the while, why it should fetch twelve dollars, when first-class American champagne flowed freely at a third as much.

They discussed the advisability of a descent on the floor. Dancing in these places had long since lost its brief vogue, but Ellyott fancied that Miss Flaubert's utterance of this truism wanted in sincerity.

He detected a lingering desire to exhibit him before her acquaintances, and laughingly insisted on a few steps at least, "in loving memory of a vanished age," he said.

She yielded, despite the obvious disapproval of her patroness.

They danced.

Ellyott was at least rewarded by the discovery that her face afforded no just index of her foot-lightness.

The music ceased.

He found himself applauding vigorously.

And then, over Miss Flaubert's shoulder, he saw Mary Lester's inscrutable face, studying him with an expression which he could not fathom.

He recognized her escort—old Jeremiah Frobisher, who, he recalled vaguely, had been her father's friend.

She nodded; he returned the greeting gravely, a little annoyed at the encounter. His taste for dancing vanished abruptly. At the little table he regarded Miss Flaubert more critically. Was she as admirably thorough in her avoidance of beauty as he had fancied at first glance? The glimpse of Mary Lester had shaken his faith in her. But, as he contrasted her with the Major's friend, his conviction returned. She was ideally, supremely, majestically unlovely.

He deftly separated the party at the carriage door, sending the delighted Bellflower away with his inamorata and escorting Miss Flaubert to her correct boarding-place himself. She was silent during the brief ride, but a glimpse of her face in the light of a gleaming shop-window revealed upon it an expression of rapt, incredulous exaltation which suffused the sunshiner's innermost spirit with a kind of holy ecstasy. He rose to new heights, insatiable adventurer, and suggested a more limited excursion for the next night.

Miss Flaubert's voice was unsteady as she agreed. She lifted her face instinctively as he touched her hand in parting. He kissed her, quite as naturally. Later he wondered whether that kiss might not have been her first. It was possible, in the face of her calling —more, it was probable, if not certain. Surely no man as yet unenlightened would have brought himself to that caress. The memory of it thrilled as no other recollection had been able to do. He was impatient for the next evening before he reached the club.

Facilis descensus Averni! Already his feet were well upon that easy, downward slope. He dreamed blissfully of a Mohammedan paradise, populated with stumpy women of breath-stopping ugliness.

III

Myrtle Flaubert wore well.

Indeed, after two evening excursions in her rapt society Ellyott found himself still under the thrall of her gorgeous ugliness to a degree which thrust the memory of his tentative appointment with Evalene Mellick well into the background of his consciousness. He found fresh marvels of unloveliness each time they met; already he had begun to shelter a suspicion that he need seek no further for an ideal.

The girl's obvious rapture in his de-

votion flooded his being with the serene exaltation of the eager martyr, and suggested insidiously the magnificence of sacrifice involved in marriage, in a lifetime dedicated to the illumination of Myrtle's admirably darkened lot. He was guilty, indeed, of more than one incautious remark from which such a state of mind on his part might have been deduced.

Myrtle, in the ecstatic stupor of a Cinderella confronted by a godmother possessed of a wonder-working wand, gradually dared to contemplate that eventuality in her turn.

Matters were at this pass when Evalene, greatly daring, took it upon herself to remind her recreant knight of his unkept vow. She accomplished this telephonically, catching Ellyott at his club just before dinner. He had no definite engagement with Miss Flaubert for the evening, although from three successive appearances at the stage-door she was, perhaps, justified in counting upon a fourth. It was his intention, indeed, to wait for her as usual after the final curtain had fallen upon the two-hundredth performance of the uplifting drama in which she took part —an affair, if we are to credit the playbills, of *"A Hundred Girlies—None of them twenty—none of them married."* Competent observers, it may be parenthetically remarked, averred that both declarations were indisputable. Twenty smacks of youth, marriage of a modicum of charm.

"Have you forgotten about the Gambols?" thrilled the arch tones of Miss Mellick, a touch of reproach struggling against a suspense perceptible despite the imperfections of telephonic communication which survive an era of invention. Ellyott remembered the incident with a start of dismay. He was conscious of a distinct preference for Stirling's and Myrtle Flaubert's mud-colored eyes to the subtler charms of the Gambols and Evalene's robust splendors. Still, a promise is a promise. And the hint of disappointment in the tone had its weight, too. A sunshiner, to bring that tremor to the voice of maidenhood? For very shame Ellyott redeemed himself.

"I was about to telephone you when you called," he declared. "Can you go to-night?"

She could, it appeared.

He called for her at eleven, aware that the Todd household regarded the matter in the light of an event. She almost shook his allegiance to Myrtle, in the first shock of her greeting. It seemed as though she touched the extreme limits of human capacity in her total innocence of flawing beauty. He melted.

During the drive to the Gambols he was pleasurably aware of satisfactory thrills of beneficence. But, once seated at their little table, the flat banality of the place, the tiresome, tawdry, clamorous performance—what New York audience would endure one of these small-hour affairs if it were given at eight-thirty?—put him out of humor with the whole adventure.

He surveyed his companion moodily, her perfect teeth perpetually reminding him that in this feature, at least, she fell far short of his ideal. He was barely polite; Evalene realized it, passed swiftly through disappointment, endeavor and bewilderment to a mild form of that proverbial fury which is the portion of a woman scorned whether she follow Medusa or Helen in point of personal allure. Her resentment became her. Damsels of oblately circular visage do well to cultivate a gravity which at least fails to augment the lateral dimensions; it is the curse of superabundant flesh to affect merriment. Studying her in this mood, Ellyott discovered that she could be almost good-looking. He thought wistfully of Myrtle and glanced at his watch. By this time she would have given him up —have cried herself to sleep, probably. A wasted evening!

"I think this is stupid—and rather vulgar," declared Evalene. "I don't see why people come here. It's hot and noisy. Let's go."

"I'm sorry. I'd forgotten what a frightful bore it is. Shall we try some-

thing else — Stirling's? Mallock's? They're not much, but at least they're better than this."

She softened, surrendering her taste of romance reluctantly. She chose Stirling's, and thither they went forthwith, to find, at the next table, a merry party consisting of Major Bellflower and the slender, blonde person at the moment occupying his fancies.

The Major greeted Ellyott effusively, mindful of his yeoman service in eliminating the unwelcome third person whom he had failed to dislodge in spite of sincere and persistent endeavor. The lissome one bowed distantly; a man of taste so perverted as to prefer Flaubert was clearly low in her esteem.

The encounter reminded Ellyott of Myrtle; he became aware of a poignant longing for her sublimated ugliness. His effort to play the cavalier languished dismally. Again Miss Mellick observed his failing interest with resentful frigidity toward a gallant so incorrigibly obtuse. He took her home in an arctic silence and they parted in mutual relief.

Out of which innocent source sprang two results—both pregnant with influence upon Ellyott's future. The Major's blonde found a malicious satisfaction in acquainting her late vassal with the facts, slightly distorted.

"I saw that John of yours at Stirling's last night with a girl out of *Town Topics*," she declared. "The Major says it's an understood thing. Rotten luck for you, old dear."

Which dismaying intelligence initiated a mental activity on Myrtle's part the ultimate effect of which was to be far-reaching indeed.

The second outgrowth of the evening eventuated in Mary Lester's studio, where Miss Mellick sat for a portrait flatteringly remote in its similitude to the original. Mary liked to talk as she worked, and the conversation veered easily to Bayard Ellyott.

"I saw you dancing with him at your aunt's," said Miss Lester. "He seemed quite smitten."

"He's a pill!" snapped Evalene mindful of blasted dreams. "I tried to kid myself into believing he'd do—poor Aunt Jessie would like it so frightfully I thought I owed it to her to try, at least—but I couldn't. I went with him to the Gambols, last night, and to Stirling's afterward, but enough is too much. Never again! I was bored to tears. There's no welcome on *my* doormat for him! Thumbs down!"

There was no mistaking her sincerity. Glancing at her, past the margin of the mendacious canvas, Mary Lester saw, for an instant, an affecting mental picture of a suppliant Ellyott, spurned haughtily by—by Evalene Mellick! Her lips twisted in their wry, unlovely smile. She remembered the girl with whom Ellyott had danced that night at Stirling's. The smile grew more amazingly unbeautiful than ever. Ellyott's first sitting was due that afternoon.

IV

Ellyott entered the studio with the air of one visiting a house of grief. To his view, indeed, the transition from affluence to poverty was a matter of deeper concern than the shorter and more commonplace journey across the Styx. His eye held that firm determination to dissipate gloom and disseminate luminance which is to be noted in the glance of those whose professional duties require frequent contact with grief.

The studio disappointed him, vaguely, by falling short of his expectations in both directions—it was neither the studio of his experience, over-furnished, over-decorated, equipped with grand-piano and Daghestan rugs, nor was it the traditional attic of poverty. It was an obvious place of business and labor, simply, almost severely, furnished, but in excellent taste, withal, and by no means inexpensively.

Mary Lester herself, however, offset his disappointment in the matter of her setting Dressed in her painting-smock, a shapeless bag which enveloped her limply from throat to heel, her lank ungainliness of body seemed accentu-

ated, her stoop of shoulder and flatness of chest became more obtrusive. Her thin hair was untidy, a strand of it fallen over one ear, the knot at the base of her skull so carelessly tied that it threatened dissolution momentarily. As for her face itself, words failed. Even to Ellyott's accustomed eye Mary was homely beyond the power of description. He brightened at the sight of her.

"It's good to be here, Mary," he said tenderly, as he held her competent hand a moment longer than the courtesies demanded.

She jerked it away impatiently. "If you enjoy it it's a pity you didn't experiment earlier," she snapped. "I sent you one of my neatly engraved announcements almost two years ago. Think of all you've missed since then!"

He chose to take her literally. "I do think of it," he declared, penitently. "I'm going to make up for it now, Mary."

"Oh, you are?" She surveyed hostilely for a moment, her eye avaluating with professional accuracy, from the rather narrow brow, the pale-blue eyes behind their shell-rimmed pince-nez to the furry, close-trimmed yellow beard which masked the lower portion of his face. Her expression softened slightly. "Well, I'm glad to hear it. Sit over here and let me see what's to be done with you."

He arranged himself stiffly in the chair she pointed out, composing his features as nearly as possible after the pose he had chosen from experiments before his glass. Mary Lester shook her head faintly. Her lips parted as if to issue new orders, but she thought better of it. Instead, taking up a sketch-block, she fell to making rough sketches casually, as though her mind were otherwise employed. Meanwhile she talked, cleverly luring his attention away from the importance of holding his pose.

"What an extraordinarily beautiful girl Gertrude Hemenway is!" she remarked. "I never saw more perfect coloring or more regular features."

The memory of his momentary attraction to the Hemenway allure annoyed him. In the light of later revelations he was ashamed of it. He shrugged his shoulders. "She's quite conventionally correct, I believe," he said, with an air of complete disinterest.

"Why, I thought you liked her tremendously," she cried, her eyes widening. He smiled dissent.

"Hardly tremendously, I should say. One is more or less courteous. Beyond that I find Miss Hemenway rather usual."

She sketched in silence for a few moments. "I'm rather fond of Evalene Mellick," she confessed, after a pause. "Heavens! What a name! Poor girl!"

He warmed a little. "She is rather more interesting, to be sure," he acquiesced. "I found her entertaining, for a time."

Her eyes opened and shut swiftly. He chose to view the incident thus, did he? Her wry grin distorted her face again. She worked on for another brief silence before her next thrust of the probe.

"I saw you at Stirling's with a rather curious person," she ventured. "I fancied that she might come from a theater perhaps—especially as Major Bellflower was with you. I didn't know you went for that sort, Bayard."

The thought of Myrtle shot through him with a pang of longing. Even with Mary before his eyes, the absent charmer's magnificent ugliness seemed poetically sublime. He stiffened. "Miss Flaubert is a lady for whom I entertain the deepest respect," he announced coldly. "I am, in fact, sincerely attached to her."

Mary's eyes widened and narrowed again. She saw at a glance that he was serious. Her smile disappeared abruptly. "I'm sorry if I seemed to criticize, Bayard. I'm sure she must be nice if you like her."

He melted instantly. "She is," he said. Again conversation lapsed. The silence oppressed him. Mary Lester, he reflected, was obtaining less of the warming radiance he had come to dis-

seminate than was fair. Poor Mary! He must really see what could be done for her.

"That smock is awfully becoming, Mary," he said at last. He knew that the most barefaced flattery is the most welcome. Truth, in a compliment, only dulls its edge. Mary stared blankly, grinned horrifically and resumed her work. He formulated a follow-up. "I like that—that smile of yours, you know—it lights up your face wonderfully."

"Sunrise in the alley!" she qualified, with perfect good-humor. He flushed. The effect was, after all, rather on that order. But he persevered.

"I think you've got a splendid, womanly face, Mary. I dislike to hear you sneer at yourself like that. You—"

She dropped her pad and sat upright, facing him. "See here, Bayard, I'm supposed to have an eye for the elements of personal charm. Also I own a looking-glass. Comments on my face are not welcome. Either they're flimsy lies or unpalatable truths. Don't—*jolly* me. It won't make your picture any handsomer—or any cheaper."

He purpled. "Charm's relative," he maintained. "Tastes vary. If you take that attitude it means that you refuse to admit the possibility of a man's—admiring you. Surely you don't take that position? Won't you believe anyone who confesses an admiration for—"

"Surely I will"—cheerfully—"hope springs eternal, you know. But I've no taste for facile, superficial lies, meant to be lightly gallant. There's just one thing that could make a man think me attractive."

"Love?" He had a flash of understanding.

"Exactly. When I hear a compliment pointed by a serious declaration of love, I'll believe it. That's one blessing of poverty. I can afford to take a man at his word. But I don't care to bet on the probability of my having an opportunity. Let's cut out the compliments, Bayard."

"Very well." He saw that she was in earnest, recognized the force of her logic. She displayed her sketches, and, despite a lingering preference for the grandeur of his privately rehearsed pose, he accepted her judgment as to the style she recommended. She proceeded to block this out on a canvas, and, so much done, dismissed him. He bore away with him a certain pleasure in the thought that there would be several such agreeable hours before the task was ended.

Mary was undeniably comfortable. There was an element of steadfastness about her which was reassuring in a world of swift changes. And he had discovered, in the course of the sitting, a number of unsuspected heights and depths of unloveliness in her face and figure which almost shook his allegiance to the charms of Myrtle Flaubert. But Mary refused the consolations of his sunshine; he could not bless and brighten her pathway except at the cost of sharing it. The idea of that extreme held, for an instant, a mystic fascination, a sort of shivering medley of temptation and dread, like the curious impulse to leap which seizes the man who gazes down from a giddy height, like the vague allure of suicide which sometimes brings the cold muzzle to the temple and makes the trigger-finger tremble in the face of solid contentment and a will to survive.

The mood passed quickly.

Marry Mary Lester?

He saw himself!

There were too many bleak lives which he could gladden at no such expense.

Myrtle, for instance. He resolved to see her that evening. Arrived at his club, however, he found that Myrtle had not left the matter wholly to his whim. A perfumed note begged him, in stilted phrase, to come to the stage-door of the Castor. She had a special reason for wanting to see him that night.

He was pleasantly moved. The nature of Myrtle's special reason did not suggest itself to him. He had no guess at the surprise in store.

V

"My friend, Miss Lansing, Mr. Ellyott."

Myrtle's tone swelled with pride, vibrated with excitement, as she made the presentation, standing in the unclean alley before the stage-entrance. This was her surprise—or part of it; the remainder was to be seen, not heard, except figuratively, perhaps. For it was a new Myrtle who confronted her cavalier in the forlorn light of the niggardly bulb, a suddenly glorified, translated Myrtle whom Ellyott's startled eyes scarcely recognized in the sudden burgeoning of an utterly unsuspected splendor.

He mechanically catalogued the elements of the metamorphosis. A new hat, straight from the Avenue, had replaced the wide, plumed creation which he remembered; its open texture cast a wide-meshed shadow on her face, with the effect of a Brobdingnagian veil, but not even this masked the transformation effected on the face itself. Massage and make-up, artfully managed, work miracles, and Myrtle, staking everything on her play, had in her own phrase "gone the limit." An artificial complexion repaired the oversights of Nature; cunning touches of pencil and brush had provided her with brows and lashes; her hair framed her face in wavy beauty—a matter of no less than three dollars to the coiffeur.

Ellyott's dazed glance sank to her figure, only to be shocked anew. Under the simple suit some mysterious skill of the corsetière had imparted a strange, almost slender grace to a form no longer dumpily squat. A dull pain of disillusion pervaded him. He had enshrined an ideal in his innermost holy-of-holies only to find at last its feet of clay. His Myrtle, the girl who absorbed his radiance as thirsty soil drinks the rain, had vanished in a twinkling, to be replaced by a stranger who clearly stood in no need of such superior discernment as his. This girl could count upon the interest of the shallowest Lothario of Broadway. A sense of loss, of deception, oppressed him.

"Pleaset'meetcha," came dully to his auditory nerves through the blur of his emotions. He followed the sound with mechanically obedient glance, hopeless, disillusioned, sore. And, like healing balm on wounds, drink after thirst, cool breezes on the heels of heat, he saw a vision which surpassed his fondest dreams. Before him, beaming awfully upon him, stood the most gloriously homely woman his bruised desire could have asked. As he drank in the grandeur of her, dazed into stupid immobility, Myrtle's voice came faintly to him.

"I knew you wouldn't mind if I ast Milly to go with us. She's heard so much about you that she was crazy to meet you. She's my best friend, you know."

"I—I'm delighted that you brought Miss Lansing," he mumbled. "Shall we go now?"

Miss Lansing giggled her pleasure. Miss Flaubert, her manner an excellent simulation of that of her late patroness, led the way majestically to the cab. Inwardly she exulted in the success of her stratagem. Not in vain had she suffered her apprenticeship. Her career as humble "friend" foisted on displeased entertainers by confident beauty, her service as animate and contrasty background chosen to enhance the charms of canny damsels of the lighter drama, had taught her well. Promoted at last to a stellar part, tardily in position to dispense the largess she had so long accepted, what more in order than a foil and retainer of her own? And she had chosen cunningly. Not hers the purblind folly of the lean maiden who selects a well-cushioned comrade nor the still more egregious error of the plump girl who exacts lank angularity in her background. She chose, instead, the type most likely to redeem her own defects.

Thus, herself inclined to pudginess, she artfully chose a girl so round and blunt that beside her Myrtle herself seemed almost slender; herself a victim

of the want of pigment which produces the pallid brows and lashes of the infra-blonde, she saw to it that no swarthy contrast accentuated this trait. Milly Lansing was Circassian in her blanched pallor, so light that the normally tinted edges of her eyelids seemed inflamed by contrast with the bleached-straw tint of their lashes and her hair had the sickly tone of turf on which a rug has lain too long. A few improvements of tint in Myrtle herself and Miss Lansing made her seem almost a brunette.

To Ellyott's fascinated eye, her extremities were startlingly abrupt; she had the uncannily condensed appearance of a jointed toy figure from which a section or two have been inadvertently omitted by the maker. Aggravating this natural endowment by a passion for lateral stripes she conveyed an impression of having been caught under a descending pile-driver and thus forcibly compressed. Untutored eyes would have recognized her grotesque ugliness; to Ellyott's connoisseur's gaze she was stupendous. Tearing his scrutiny from her, he flashed a glance at Myrtle, to wonder dully how he could have been so blunted of perception as to admit her claim to appealing ugliness. Her feeble pretensions faded before Milly Lansing's triumphant, overpowering effulgence as stars pale before the dawn.

"You're in the Revue, Miss Lansing?" He heard his voice asking the question as the cab slithered a perilous progress toward Stirling's.

"Oh, no!" Myrtle answered hurriedly. "Milly's a manicure at Gracey's. She hasn't got the stage temp'ment."

Diabolical cunning, this—to redeem her own adherence to a calling more or less maculate by confronting the suitor with a visible embodiment of one distinctly farther down the scale! A manicure! Ellyott's fancy leaped at the vista it suggested—a struggle for existence compared to which the lightsome lot of the chorus was a joyous revel. His heart swelled as he thought of the radiance with which he could and would flood Milly Lansing's joyless, drab outlook. He resented the implied defect.

"That's nothing against Miss Lansing," he declared coldly. "Temperament is a doubtful blessing at its best."

Myrtle subsided, puzzled, hurt. It could not be that Ellyott had fallen for Milly. Her mind rejected the hypothesis as absurd. He was sore on *her*—that was it. Well, he'd get over it. With the new rags and the facial and the wave, he'd come to life at Stirling's. She ordered splendidly, oblivious to the fact that Ellyott's gaze was fixed upon Miss Lansing's protruding, awed eyes and wonder-parted lips with something like adoration.

"You don't mind if we have a dance while we're waiting, do you, dearie?" Myrtle patronized regally. Miss Lansing shook a speechless head, but Ellyott spoke firmly.

"I think I'll not dance to-night," he declared. "Do you like manicuring as a profession, Miss Lansing?"

The robin's-egg eyes narrowed. "Does a dog like fleas?" she demanded. "Say, do I look that crazy?"

Miss Flaubert's face expressed her pain at this inelegance, but Ellyott was unaware of Miss Flaubert just then.

"Why don't you give it up, then?" he pursued.

"Oh, I suppose it's on account of a bad habit I got. I simply got to eat once in a while."

Ellyott thrilled. Here was need of him indeed. He could relieve this stress of necessity—could shed a financial sunshine as well as an emotional radiance into a life pathetically in need of both.

"We'll have to find something better for you, then," he beamed. "Would you"—he had already forgotten his earlier refusal—"would you care to dance, Miss Lansing?"

"Would a pig eat?" retorted the lady, already on her feet. Ellyott nodded a careless excuse to Myrtle, petrified into silent immobility by this phenomenon and led the way to the cramped floor. He had the exalted feeling of one who has laid hold, at

long last, on an elusive ideal. There could be nothing so near to perfection as this.

When they returned it was to find Major Bellflower at their table, but Ellyott scarcely realized his presence. The Major, however, lessened the tension of the situation providentially by devoting himself to Myrtle with an assiduity which mollified her visibly. Deserted by the difficult blonde affinity, the warrior's eye found the transmogrified Myrtle soothing, especially after Milly Lansing's proximity enhanced the adventitious charms of the other. He clung to his place and, casually invited, accepted nourishment and stimulant.

Later he repaid this entertainment by volunteering to squire Miss Flaubert to her abode. Ellyott was grateful; he was acutely aware of an irritating superfluity on the part of Myrtle, just then. He placed his new paragon tenderly in the cab and was delighted to learn that she dwelt far to the east on Seventy-ninth Street. During the ride he waxed almost eloquently complimentary. Miss Lansing accepted his sallies calmly. Plainly she possessed a more trustful disposition than Mary Lester. She betrayed no annoying tendency to look gift horses in the teeth. He was captivated, charmed.

Depositing her on the doorstep of one of those model-tenements which would pass muster elsewhere as palatial apartment-dwellings, he begged permission to call, and was graciously authorized to present himself next evening. She lived, it appeared, with her mother. The propriety of this delighted Ellyott. He had all the concern of the true burgher for respectability. His last doubt faded. His quest had ended.

Next day, sitting before Mary Lester's easel, he was annoyed when she referred amiably to Miss Flaubert. He had almost forgotten Myrtle, and the reminder yielded a twinge of self-reproach. He must have caused her pain by his desertion—a gross reversal of his sunshine-scattering habit. He shook off the mood impatiently.

"I'm not in the least interested in Miss Flaubert," he said tartly. Mary stared. He flushed a little under the scrutiny, conscience accusing him of callous fickleness. Instinctively he made excuse. "She has other friends," he added, with a nice hint of regret in his tone, as one who suffers undeservedly. "Major Bellflower seems to have replaced me in her regard."

Mary's terrible smile twisted her features. "I'm so sorry," she cried sympathetically. It occurred to Ellyott, as he shrugged his shoulders to indicate a noble effort at submissive acceptance of fate, that he must have been blind to fancy that Myrtle Flaubert's tame semblance of homeliness surpassed the transcendent array of unlovely traits revealed in Mary's countenance. He was again impressed with the durable quality of Mary's charm; instead of waning with acquaintance it deepened each time he beheld it, revealing fresh magnitudes with every changing mood. It was the type of ugliness, he decided, which would grow on one, intensifying as the years passed. But he was not tempted by it. Mary had no real need of him; it was clear that his presence failed to inspire in her the bliss it aroused in others. He could not cheer her with light trifles, as he had done with Myrtle, as he meant to do with Milly; she demanded all or nothing. And the memory of Milly Lansing put an end to the speculation.

His mind refused to contemplate lesser charms than hers.

As he took his leave he was conscious that Mary's gaze rested on him with a curious, unfathomable expression which vaguely pleased. He infused an extra touch of cordiality into his farewell.

VI

"Some poils!"

Milly Lansing's phrase lacked elegance, but her tone made up for the defect. It was impersonally reverential, devoid even of wistfulness. She gazed meanwhile at a string of imitation pearls, which, had they been manufactured by oysters instead of highly paid

human specialists, would have been worth two years' income to Ellyott. They shimmered alluringly in the window of a cheap pawn-shop-and-jewelry-store on Broadway, hard by Herald Square. Ellyott, who had progressed to the point at which he was permitted to call at Gracey's Emporium for Milly, was touched by her artless admiration. She was too humble even to sigh for the pearls. There was no suggestive wheedle in her voice. He glanced at the price-ticket. A hundred and twenty-five dollars.

"Would you like them, Milly?" He smiled benignly. A bricky patch stained each of Milly's cheeks. She turned scornfully alert eyes on him.

"Would a wop eat garlic?" she inquired. "What's the big idea? Some kidder, ain't you?"

"Come along." Ellyott trembled with an exquisite pleasure as he led the way into the shop. With dumb disbelief Milly stood by as the transaction was completed. The small parcel clutched in a death-grip, she walked at his elbow in mute stupefaction. They emerged upon the walk in time to come face to face with Mary Lester, hurrying southward.

The *rencontre* annoyed Ellyott. He seemed fated to confront Mary Lester at such moments. He saw her eyes dart understandingly from him to Milly, and thence to the shop from which they had come, and again to the palpable jeweler's package in Milly's clutch. Again he recognized the inscrutable expression which he had seen before on Mary's lips, a look which defied his effort to analyze it. He nodded curtly and passed on. He did not notice that Milly had bowed, nor that Mary's smile and nod had included her. His irritation faded swiftly as they reached the quiet restaurant in Thirty-sixth Street where he had elected to dine and he was free to give his undivided attention to Milly's charms, accented horrifically by her gratitude and delight in the "poils."

She wore a cheap suit, wonderfully and fearfully checked, and a wide, flopping, feathered hat which foreshortened her grotesquely. When the heavy string of pearls was draped above her expanse of throat, almost horizontal in its upper reaches, the effect was stupendous. His heart softened toward her. Even when her appetite revealed a preference for starches and sweets he forbore to counsel caution.

"I oughtn't to of taken 'em." Contrition came upon her tardily. "I don't know what Ma'll say to it. She's strict—awful strict."

"It's all right, Milly," he reassured her. "I'm strict, too, you know."

"Are you?" She surveyed him obliquely. "You say it all right," she conceded, after a pause. "Maybe it's just a case of good heart, but Ma sure will hit the roof, just the same."

"Nonsense! It gives me pleasure to get you pretty things, Milly. I enjoy it—truly I do. There's no possible harm." He would not have her pleasure—and his—lessened by needless scruples. Nevertheless he refused her invitation, when they reached the doorstep of the model-tenement, to linger a little in the Lansing flat. He felt it discreet to avoid Ma for the moment.

Evidently the maternal doubts were satisfied, for not only did he fail to detect any symptoms of distrust on Mrs. Lansing's part when next they met, but subsequent experiments with Milly's complaisant attitude toward gifts proved that she no longer hesitated. He took a keen delight in gratifying her curious whims. Raiment which would have shamed Solomon himself, hats in bewildering profusion, petty trinkets of flashy, false jewelry came to her as if by magic. Her pleasure was so obvious, so child-like, that he found an extraordinary degree of reflective enjoyment in it. He was deeply touched. It seemed to him that he would ask nothing more of fate than a future of such keenly exquisite emotions. Milly satisfied him. He had no least temptation to fare farther for a finer subject.

He avoided Mary's studio for a week or more, annoyed by what transpired

when he first visited it after the encounter on Broadway. Mary met him with a queer medley of hostility and sympathy, a thing peculiarly irritating to his consciousness of combined impeccability and content.

"I—I saw you with Milly Lansing, didn't I?" she asked casually.

He started. "You know her?" It displeased him to discover this.

"I have my nails done at Gracey's," she explained. "I went there first because it was cheaper than the regular places and I've kept on going since the economy didn't matter—out of habit, I suppose."

"Oh!" He froze. There was an interval of silence. Then:

"Milly has some pearls, I've noticed. And she's taken to wearing the most amazing clothes." She eyed him slantwise, waiting a reply. He said nothing. She bit her lips. After a moment she threw down her brush and straightened. "Bayard, can't you let Milly alone? It's unfair! She's never had any fun in her life—never known what it was to own pretty clothes and trinkets. She hasn't a chance against a man like you. And in spite of the manicuring she's a good girl."

He stiffened, as he rose abruptly to his feet. "I am obliged to you for the implied compliment," he said gratingly. "If it affords you any reassurance to know that I sincerely respect and admire Miss Lansing, that my intentions toward her are entirely honorable, you —er—you have it! Good afternoon!"

He strode forth in outraged dignity and bruised virtue. Under the spell of his eloquence he considered the question of his intentions for the first time. He had not actually thought of bestowing upon Milly the final honor of marriage; even his distorted vision had seen from afar the stark impossibility of that extreme. But now, in the flush of injured innocence, the idea seemed wholly suitable. He dallied with it, deliciously, as a visitor at Niagara debates the proposition of leaping into the hurrying waters. The magnitude of the sacrifice charmed him, hypnotized him. It would be epic. Compared with the blinding radiance which an offer of his hand would diffuse upon Milly's lot the minor benevolences he had contemplated seemed suddenly feeble, contemptible.

He squared his shoulders and struck across town to Sixth Avenue, where a clanking elevated train whisked him to the convenient bridge leading to Gracey's second-floor from the station. His decision was taken; he meant to waste no time in carrying it into effect. He would take Milly away from her degrading, menial drudgery and lift her straight to the seventy-seventh heaven in one giddy, breathless, upward swoop. He trembled at the thought of her dazed delight, her incredulous, awed ecstasy.

But at the manicure-parlor a check awaited him. Milly, it appeared, had not come down that morning. No, she had not sent word. She didn't often miss a day, either. He was conscious of curious inspection on the part of the interested girls as he pressed his inquiries. Evidently Milly's possession of a liberal-minded cavalier had excited remark among her mates. He turned away, a little alarmed. If Milly were ill—!

At the street he found a taxi, and, as he sped northward, his mind dwelt anxiously on the possible contingencies which might have overtaken the girl. He told the driver to wait for him and hastened up the three flights to the Lansing flat.

The door swung open to his knock. He faced Mrs. Lansing, obviously in a state of some excitement, and beyond her caught a glimpse of Milly, clad in her best. A short scream testified to her surprise at his advent.

He thrust his way into the room. A dark, slightly oily youth, wearing a green suit with a bright pink waistcoat, his hair roached back from his brow in an elaborate whorl, plastered flatly, became visible now.

He stepped back hurriedly as Ellyott entered.

There was a long, tense pause. The atmosphere was electric. Ellyott felt

irresistibly the sense of vague, impending catastrophe. He glanced from one of the trio to the others, searchingly. Milly spoke first.

"Mr. Ellyott, shake hands with Mr. Carnevale," she commanded, by way of elegantly formal presentation. The oleaginous one skipped forward briskly and pumped Ellyott's unresisting hand. A faint, familiar perfume assailed the sunshiner's nostrils.

Another silence. Then Milly, with a kind of desperation in her face and manner, touched the mine.

"Tony and I just got married," she announced. "How about congratulating us a few, Bayard? Ain't it coming to us?"

The room swam dizzily before Ellyott's vision. He had a confused recollection, later, of more handshakings, of much laughter, of a goblet of some sour wine, drained to the health of the happy pair. Only when he was about to go, when Milly, detaching herself from the ardent Mr. Carnevale, followed him to the privacy of the landing, did his mind clear to cogent thought. Milly was plainly afflicted with certain twinges of conscience.

"I hope it's all right, Mr. Ellyott," she said anxiously. "I—I been engaged to Tony for a coupla years and —and I felt kinda funny about going out with you the way I did. Do you think I ought to of told you I was going to marry Tony? I almost did, a lot of times, but—but—"

"Well?" he prompted, not unkindly. "Why didn't you, Milly?"

She flushed. "I just couldn't. I know you wouldn't be running after me if you got hep to me being engaged to a barber like Tony, and I just couldn't pass you up. I never had a chance to do any grafting before, and I saw a grand trousseau coming to me easy as easy if I kept my face shut long enough. It was low-down of me. I see that now. I—I'll give the things back if you say so—"—bravely.

Ellyott smiled. "Forget all about it, Milly," he said gently. "I'll call it a wedding present. Good-bye."

"Thanks." Milly's voice followed him down the stairs. "So long!"

Mercifully he bore away from the interview a distinct impression of Milly's shattered repulsiveness. As the scales of infatuation fell from his eyes he saw that his ideal of her had been nothing more than an illusion. She was no longer the poetically ugly woman he had fancied her; there was no touch of tragic appeal in his new conception of her life, and viewed as a proud and contented spouse, the last trace of his passionate desire to cheer and brighten her pathway became absurd in his own eyes. He had been mercifully preserved. Following a will-o-the-wisp he had yet stumbled clear of the quicksands of the marsh.

He shuddered at the narrowness of his escape. A little more and he would have wasted his store of radiance upon one who had no slightest need of it, flung away a lifetime to illumine a path already bright with the effulgence of Tony Carnevale. He suddenly identified the perfume which challenged him. It was bay rum.

VII

"I—I'm sorry, Bayard. I heard about it at Gracey's. I—" Ellyott lifted his hand and Mary Lester's half-timid condolence died on her lips—the lips that wore the unspeakably terrible grin he remembered so well.

"Let's not speak of it. It was sheer folly on my part. I wish to forget it."

He smiled almost merrily. Mary studied him with level, unwavering gaze. He was struck suddenly by a ray of true vision. For the first time he saw her as she was, realized clearly the grandeur of her complete and flawless ugliness. A pang of self-scorn shot through him. Fool! Blind, stubborn blunderer! With such a poem of unloveliness under his eyes to stray wilfully among the illusory figments of a perfervid fancy! He stared at her, spell-bound, fascinated by his tardy discovery, drinking in the majesty of her as the toper thirsts for clear, cool water

after false liquors. She flushed under his scrutiny, and broke the tension by waving him to his chair.

He studied her still as she worked; the sight of her ministered to his aching self-assurance. Here, after all, was the end of his rainbow. Here was the truly tragic emptiness which he could fill, the chill, bleak gloom which he could scatter forever. A Myrtle Flaubert could always find a Major Bellflower to serve as sun; a Milly Lansing could look for radiance to a Tony Carnevale. Such humble ones had no need of a Bayard Averey Ellyott. But Mary Lester—born to the best the world afforded, trained from birth to discriminate nicely—nothing short of masculine perfection could possibly content her. Why had he not realized it long ago?

Here was his task, ready to his hand.

Here was his mission and his reward.

He drew his breath deeply.

"Mary," he said softly, "I wonder if you guess how lovely you are."

Brush and palette fell from her fingers. She stared stupidly. Then, with a sudden rush of color to her cheeks, she found herself. Stooping for her implements, she spoke sharply.

"Please don't be absurd, Bayard. It's rather—rather cruel to say such things to me, even in jest. I told you before that I don't believe—"

He smiled happily. "You qualified the statement. You said that you would believe, if—if the speaker—loved you—wanted you for his—"

"Well?" She was busy with her brush again, impatient.

"I tell you again that you are lovely in my eyes, Mary—and you must believe me, this time, for I love you. I want you to—to marry me!"

Slowly her eyes rose to his. They questioned, probed deep. And they read only sincerity. Across her face stole the strange, unfathomable smile he had seen so often. He quivered as the full perfection of her stark, unblemished ugliness came home to him.

"Do you—do you truly want me, Bayard?" she asked slowly. *"Me?"*

He came quickly toward her, his hands outstretched appealingly. "More than heaven itself," he said, his voice shaking. It was wholly true. He wanted her as he had never wanted anything in all his life. She felt the sincerity of it. The curious smile softened terribly.

"Then I think you ought to have me," she said.

He kissed her. Just as his eyes closed by the kindly provision of nature which avoids shocking lovers with a foreshortened vision of the beloved face, he caught a glimpse of her, out of focus, breath-taking, glorious. Bliss unspeakable flooded him.

* * * *

They had been married a week—one hundred and sixty-eight hours of pure ecstasy for Ellyott. Not for him those catastrophic disillusions of the early honeymoon, those grim, stark moments face to face with stern realities which heretofore romance has masked. He crossed the corridor toward the studio eagerly; his hand shook as he lifted it to the knob. He knew that in another moment he would look upon his wife and find in her some fresh miracle of frightfulness. Not once had she failed him in this.

He opened the door noiselessly, to take her unawares—she was sufficiently feminine, he had discovered, to hide some measure of her homeliness when conscious of his observation. Voices reached him.

He paused, listened.

He distinguished masculine tones.

It irritated him mildly that another man should presume to share his task of cheering Mary's lot. He craved a full monopoly of the lighting-privileges there.

He peered cautiously into the room. The caller was only old Jeremiah Frobisher.

His annoyance vanished. Mary had been showing the portrait, almost finished now. He felt a sudden desire to eavesdrop, to hear her confess her feeling toward himself. He strained his ears.

"Flatters him," declared Frobisher, rubbing his chin.

"Of course it flatters him," said Mary. "Do you think people pay a painter for anything else. And I expected to be paid for this when I did it."

"Umph!" Frobisher shook his grizzled head. "There's no accounting for tastes, Mary, but I'm damned if I can see why you—"

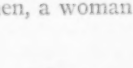
"Of course you wouldn't," Mary cut in eagerly. "Yet the portrait ought to give you a hint, at least. Don't you see how inexpressibly pathetic it is? It used to make my heart ache, when I painted him—he was so utterly forlorn. so unloved, so alone. And I watched him as he went down the scale . . . you know he'd dropped out of his own crowd, long ago. There was no one there who would even look at him. I ran across him later, going the rounds of the newer, cheaper set—it was pitiful, Uncle Jerry. I remember one night when Mrs. Todd seated him next to Gertrude Hemenway. The way she got rid of him hurt me; I knew what it was to be—in the way. He turned to Evalene Mellick—you've seen her—that impossible niece of Mrs. Todd's. She tried hard to endure him, she told me later, for his name's sake, but she simply couldn't. Then you and I ran into him at Stirling's—he was with a barbarously awful person from some chorus or other. He told me himself that he was devoted to her. Major Bellflower—fancy that!—Major Bellflower took *her* away from him. And then came a terrible little manicure from Gracey's. He bought her pearls. He raved about her in this very studio. She married an Italian barber. And so he—he came to me! Think of it, Uncle Jerry! It was the pathos of that last touch that decided me, I think. Imagine a man so friendless, so desperately lonely, that he could bring himself to believe he actually cared for—for me! I simply couldn't have said no. It would have been like kicking at a lost puppy—I couldn't send him away."

There was a pause. Then: "It's been worth while, too, Uncle Jerry. I'm actually enjoying it. I make him so deliriously happy that I can bask in the reflection of his joy and be moderately happy myself. I wonder if that isn't the secret of happiness, after all—to stop seeking it selfishly and concentrate on bringing it to others. I'm happy, anyway, in the knowledge that I've lifted poor Bayard right up to the plane of the gods. He's mad about me—no, I mean it. Mad!"

Soundlessly Bayard Averey Ellyott stole back to his own room, his brain numb. Vague ideas of suicide tempted him. He fumbled in an upper drawer for a small revolver . . . as his fingers grasped the butt understanding came to him anew. A radiant smile illumined his rapt face. After all, he was making her happy! She said so, didn't she? What did the process matter, if the end was the same? Weren't they ideally mated? Two sunshiners that shone as one? . . .

There is no cure for the sunshine habit, it appears.

TO be interesting to women, a man must look as though he had an interesting past. To be interesting to men, a woman must look as though she would be interesting in the future.



THE MISOGAMISTS CLUB

By L. M. Hussey

I

THE club of which Julian Stanley became a member at the age of thirty had the superficial semblance of other clubs. It was well enough appointed; the steward was efficient; the membership was recruited with a certain amount of discrimination; the members ate, drank, smoked and talked there. Yet it was a different club because it had an inner soul that dominated and marked it. It had come into being suddenly through the chance meetings of its founders and the members were bound together less by social and convivial ties than by their collective adherence to a sometimes scoffing, sometimes bitter, nearly always cynical faith.

All of them, in short, were misogamists, or haters of marriage, and most of them were misogynists, or haters of women.

From the day of his initiation, Julian was delighted with the club. It was not old then—not more than two years. But even in that time the agreeable soul of the place seemed to have touched and coloured even its distinctly material features. Particularly the long, paneled smoking-room enclosed a subtle atmosphere of security that enhanced, somehow, the comfort of the chairs, the flavour of the cigars burned there, the almost rhythmic hum of voices speaking. It was the quarter of the club Julian loved the best. He found content there in any manner—sometimes silently, when he smoked at ease and watched the portrait of Schopenhauer that hung prominently above his eyes, or again, in conversation, that not infrequently exhibited wit.

Most of the members were like himself, young. Each of them contributed some special statement of the common faith that went to form the inner spirit of the club. The more tedious spoke in statistics, the more clever in paradox.

None of the members displeased Julian.

He liked Carnaby, who was bitter, who was vitriolic.

"In the prison of marriage, the striped suit is worn on the soul," was attributed to Carnaby.

He liked Horn, who was punditic, but sometimes subtle. Horn said: "Imaginative men are cursed because through that faculty they foresee false felicities in marriage. Unimaginative men are cursed because without that faculty they fail to foresee infelicities in marriage."

He also took pleasure in the ironical inversions Burkhart devised, Burkhart who once remarked to him: "The tragedy of love begins in the church; the romance of love begins in the divorce court."

And there were such desirable fellows as Hagy, George Lund, Moote, Howard Collins—particularly Howard Collins, who once said to him: "In the romantic life of men, desire is the plot, a kiss the intrigue, a proposal the unhappy ending." Each of these men was a contributor to the unique and fascinating quality of this club and nowhere else did Julian feel the sensation of such complete harmony with all his opinions and beliefs.

There was one inflexible rule to

which each member agreed, one *causa excommunico*. Should any member fall from grace, depart from his principles, in short, get married, his connection with the club was thereby severed. But in so far as this law might affect *them*, all of these young men were considered life members.

Julian had enjoyed the pleasant atmosphere of the misogamists' club for nearly a year, when he suffered a great misfortune—the loss of the greater part of the investments made in his name under his father's will. For the first time in his life he was confronted with the necessity of earning a living.

He took count of all that remained to him and found it quite inadequate to his needs. So he communicated with several people whom he judged might be of assistance, and more particularly with Señor Julio de la Fuente, one of the oldest and most beloved friends of his father, a gentleman living in Peru. After this, Julian waited.

The hours of those few weeks of inactivity were unhappy. He spent much of his time at the club, but it was the club itself that gave him his sharpest sorrow. He loathed the notion of giving up his pleasant leisure there. It was a cenobium of his desire from which ill-fortune was separating him. Until that time he never fully knew how completely the desirable savour of the place had infused itself into his blood.

But as he expected, a gracious letter came from Señor de la Fuente.

"Our mines here in Peru were never doing better," the note told him. "I myself am much interested at present in several ventures and I could use your assistance and put much in your way. Come at once to Lima, live in my house, *pues usted es el hijo de mi mejor amigo. . . .*"

To do as his father's old friend desired was in every way the best thing for Julian, and that he perceived plainly. Yet because it hurt him so much to acknowledge by a definite act the end of his leisure and the close of his connection with the club, he let another week pass in uncomfortable idleness. Then, like a sudden spring, he bubbled with activity, packed up those things he designed to take with him, secured his steamship passage to Callao, and after a final dinner with the misogamists of the desiderate club embarked.

II

Señor de la Fuente was unable to meet Julian at Callao, so in consequence he took the electric car to Lima alone. He was not sure then whether he would find the old gentleman at his home in the Plaza—the very admirable Plaza Mayor—or at his offices in the business section, La Calle Mercaderes, of course. From what Julian guessed of his habits, he rather imagined old de la Fuente in the former place, but this supposition proved wrong. He found him in his office, buried at ease in a large armchair and genially smoking a good cigar.

The old gentleman placed his hands on Julian's shoulders and looked at him affectionately.

"It is your father come back into my life," he said. "The resemblance is very great. You shall consider me your second father."

He insisted that Julian take his chair; the two were seated and talked together.

Señor de la Fuente was a picturesque man. He wore long white moustaches and a great white beard above which his red cheeks glowed like spots of immobile, dull fire. He was massive and tall. And his voice was limpid and caressing and his manners suave and genial, Julian knew something of his stormy history—his political intriguing and particularly his active participation in the Gutierrez usurpation, at the time when Balta was assassinated—and now the ease of the old man's manner seemed to deny that early part of his life.

Le la Fuente arose at last, smiling.

"Our dinner will be ready for us," he said. "We will go home now and

then you shall see where you are to live."

They went out to the street, where a motor was already waiting, driven by a stoop-shouldered native whom the old gentleman addressed as Andalicio. De la Fuente was fluent in his explanations of the notable places they passed and the antique, old-world appearance of Lima charmed away for that time some of the sadness Julian felt.

They alighted before an ancient Spanish house in the square opposite the cathedral. The building was of gray stone, picturesquely ornamented with dark red carvings on the upper façade. Ascending the flights of steps, the old man stood aside on the coloured tiled floor of the porch and waved Julian to precede him. As Julian went in he was pleased by the majesty of the stained marble stairs that curved down into the long hall.

It was not until later, when they had gone into the dining-room for dinner, that Julian met Adela.

He then remembered for the first time, from some casual remarks of his father that came back to him like the shapes of vague ghosts, the existence of old de la Fuente's daughter. She bore little resemblance to the old man. She was small and dark and her eyes were as black as the wing of a crow, with a lustre that gave them depths.

"Adela," said her father, "this is Julian."

He touched her little hand and the four seated themselves at the table.

The fourth was the old aunt, Maria, a person to be expected in this household where there was a young woman not yet married. She had no smile for Julian, only a sudden, searching stare from her old jetty eyes that seemed the sole part of her still alive. Her hair was a dull white, like trodden and soiled snow, and the skin of her face and hands was dry and coriaceous.

De la Fuente sustained the conversation. Adela said little; the old aunt nothing. After a course of the long, savoury *peje rey*, a sour, red table-wine —*La Rieviera*—was served which appeared to add largely to the geniality of Julian's host.

"You will like it with us in Lima," he said to Julian.

"I am sure of that."

"You will find us different and all our customs different. In order to enjoy us, you must adapt yourself to us."

"What must I observe more particularly?"

"Our leisure and the forms of our punctilio."

Yes—the forms of their punctilio; Julian was impressed with that, more particularly as he glanced at the little Adela. The paradoxes of the Misogamists' Club seemed to fail in their application to her. She was typically the young woman of a Spanish household. She was guarded by the aunt, Maria, like a treasure in the presence of a dragon. And for this reason there were possible to her none of the manifestations of inelectible pursuit so pleasantly recognized in the club.

Understanding this so soon, Lima seemed a little unreal to Julian. His theories were out of joint. He was pondering his dilemma when the old gentleman introduced him to a strong, purple liqueur to which he gave the name *chicha*, after which they retired from the table.

III

Adela made Julian curious. Had he been the guest in a household at home he would have avoided her. He held that the men who escaped capture did so through good fortune, not adroitness. In this instance that view was patently silly. Even were it Adela's desire, she would have had no opportunity to employ any arts of fascination. She was never outside the company of her ancient aunt. Very soon Julian found himself wondering about her psychological condition.

He talked to her somewhat at length a week after his arrival.

She was seated in the parlour when he entered, a book open on her lap. The dragon kept her watch from a

corner, where she communed with whatever curious spirits were her company. Adela sat near a large mahogany table, under a huge and elaborate candelabrum suspended from the ceiling that threw over her the glow of a dozen tiny, flame-like electric bulbs.

She raised her head and smiled faintly as Julian drew up his chair near her.

"What are you reading?" he asked.

"Stories. . . ." she said.

She covered the book, turned down now, with her hands.

"Do you read frequently?" he asked her.

"Not a great deal. I haven't much time."

"What do you do with your time, Adela? I've wondered just what activities you young ladies have here."

"I am at church in the morning."

"And in the afternoon?"

"Often Graciela and Adriana come. They are my friends. We talk to each other, and sometimes we walk out. And then, on other days, I go to see Graciela, or to see Adriana."

The ancient Maria came out of her corner and stood silently near the table. Adela smiled faintly again and arose.

"Buenas noches," she murmured.

Julian bowed.

As she turned to slip her hand under Maria's arm he caught the title of the book she held.

It was a volume of the stories of Guy de Maupassant, in the original French.

Julian seated himself, piqued and puzzled. He was the more piqued for that turn of his mind that gave him the desire to understand the thoughts of others. And the etiquette of the country put a mask, to the moment impenetrable, like a wall that cuts off the communication of eye and voice, over the mind of this girl Adela, shielding her thoughts from his curiosity. She probably had thoughts of some sort. It was exasperating.

A melancholy humour dropped like a dusk mantle over Julian's spirits. He regretted his misfortunes. He desired his old life strongly, and the world of his old ideas. He wondered about the club and visioned the members severally and imagined the things at the moment they might be saying.

Julian realized fully then an essential of his own character. It came to his understanding that he was one of those men whose lives are not activities, but ideas. The cynical beliefs that he had cherished were his world. And he was sad, as one at a death, because he no longer lived in them.

His duties with old de la Fuente, however, were not strenuous. The old gentleman was adroit, he understood the popular South American art that the Cuban neighbors call *chivo*, and his connexions with the government, unofficial, were subtle and intricate. Concessions came to him easily, like pearls found casually in an oyster. And Julian's material fortunes seemed very well assured.

Their custom now was to depart from their rooms in the Calle Mercaderes a little before four, to be driven home by Andalicio. Tea was always served them, frequently, at this period of the year, outside, under a little *kiosco*. Her Julian saw, on several occasions, those young friends of Adela's of whom she had spoken. Their presence gave no food to the satisfaction of his curiosity, his wonder over the inner Adela. The girls together were astonishingly artificial. They spent many moments of their time in schoolgirlish giggles.

Then, one afternoon, Julian had his first conversation alone with Adela.

It was in the same little summer house. Julian found her seated there and when he observed that the aunt Maria was not in attendance his astonishment left him for a moment without speech.

Adela smiled her same small smile, looking up at him inscrutably out of her huge eyes. Again she was reading from the volume of short-stories.

"Those are both romantic and realistic tales you read," Julian ventured.

"You know them, Julian?"

"Yes."

"I like to read of another sort of life than my own."

"Your life is very curious to me, Adela. It is quite different from that of the young women in my country."

"Ah, yes!" she cried. "I have often wondered . . . I've wondered—"

She paused, staring out at the garden. A huge bee fell into the cup of a flower at her feet, raping its hidden nectar. Julian leaned forward.

"You must let me tell you—" he began.

She stood up suddenly.

"Good-bye," she called.

And she ran past him out of the garden, like a summer cloud before a wind. Looking after her, Julian made out through the lattice the gnomish shape of the old aunt, standing on the porch. . . .

He was now fully intrigued by his curiosity. In odd and unexpected moments a vision of Adela's midnight eyes came into his mind, resting on him in a singular manner, as if in their pools of lustrous ink they held that elusive secret of Adela's personality.

Intuitively perhaps, or again, it might have been only out of a vague hope, Julian appeared in the garden the next day, at the hour he had found Adela before. As he approached the latticed *kiosco* he felt sure that he discerned barred white patches of her dress. And he was not wrong.

As he stood near her her cheeks tinged as if a cardinal flower had blossomed on them.

"I wondered—"

"What?" he asked.

"—if you would come here today. . . ."

"You expected me?"

She was silent.

"I wondered if I would find *you* here," he said.

She turned up her face, her great black eyes glistening nacreously. Julian stood over her a moment, meeting her glance. In that second they might have been two of an evil craft, each endeavouring to spell the other.

Her small hand lay over the arm of her chair. Julian reached out and touched it. And at his touch Adela stood up suddenly, circled his neck with her arms and kissed him.

In the next instant, with a faint cry, she drew back. The startled expression on her face and her frightened stare gave understanding to Julian. He wheeled, and, as he expected, found old Maria just ouside the door, glaring at the two.

For a few seconds Adela maintained her startled immobility. But then, after a gesture from the old woman, she drew toward her. Maria seized the girl's arm and the two disappeared rapidly through the garden.

Julian remained standing as before. For some moments he was sensually bemused, as if from a strong beverage. In those seconds he seemed endowed with a vastly stimulated esthesia. But impinging at last upon the images created out of his flushed sensations appeared sharp, unpleasant pictures of the ancient aunt, and from these, growing cognizances of his new position in the household. And suddenly Julian knew that he must act.

He turned quickly and strode out of the summer house, walking rapidly toward the mansion. He had no difficulty in discovering de la Fuente, for the old gentleman was seated by a window in the parlor, exhaling clouds of scented cigar-smoke.

Julian stood in front of him a second and then spoke.

"Señor," he said, formally, "I have come to ask you for the hand of your daughter."

The old man turned in his chair with a stiff movement.

"Eh!" he exclaimed.

And then he arose, facing Julian, who was now silent. It was a tense moment from which no one could have predicted the outcome. But that came, agreeably. Old de la Fuente extended his arms, clasping Julian's shoulders.

"You have been my son in spirit," he said. "I will be glad to know you as my son in fact. You have my permission, Julian. . . ."

As Julian turned away in the dusky room, there throbbed in his heart a pang of sadness, keen as the thrust of a pointed needle. A thought of the club had come into his mind. He had now done that which automatically severed him from membership. . . .

IV

ADELA, who loved pleasure and change, had consented readily, and Julian laid his plans for his first visit back to the States in six years of absence. It was now a little over five years since he had married Adela.

In that time the opportunity had been his to analyze and dissect the obscure impulses and motives that had led him into his marriage. He saw himself as a victim of circumstances and his own curiosity. Could he have remained at home with the misogamists, within the impregnable citadel of their club, he would have escaped.

At least, he had satisfied his curiosities. Marriage with Adela had enabled him to probe for those opinions and thoughts in her mind that previous to their union had seemed hidden by the formalities of her environment. He quite comprehended now the workings of that mind. Outside of its formal adherences, it had no thoughts or opinions.

Julian's impulse to return home for a visit had grown in his mind like an irrepressible plant for more than a year. The desire was daily stronger, the springs of it obscure. He did not inquire into just what he might find at home.

Adela and Julian took passage from Callao in the late spring. Their trip was unmarked by any notable events. It was on a day of clear and caressing sunlight that Julian first sighted, against a high sky, the elk-like etchings of New York. There was the line of the city, mysterious, unreal and beautiful, a white and gold jewel out of the sea, with snow-plumaged gulls moving across the face of it.

They disembarked and at once the clangorous mystery of reality supplanted that unreal mystery seen from the waters. As they were driven to their hotel, Adela's spirits ran high, while Julian was sad.

His first breath of the air of the city had given him a definite and keen desire, a wish that had probably been with him for months, the secret and unspoken spring of his desire to return. His wish was to sit in the club again.

That was impossible. Under an inflexible rule he could not be admitted. The very soul of the club, all the club stood for, denied him.

Yet he could not reason away his urgency. And two days after his return, in the early morning, he succumbed to his longing. He determined to practice a deception. He decided to go to the club and hide the fact of his marriage!

It was a determination Julian carried out within a few hours. His sensations and emotions as he again mounted the marble steps that gave ingress thronged about him like many spirits clutching at his heart, and among them the wraiths of a thousand memories.

Walking into the well-beloved smoking-room he was surprised to see no one about, save a single figure, and this seated rather disconsolately, it seemed, in the dark end, away from the windows. The man looked up and Julian recognized Horn.

Horn peered at him and then arose suddenly.

"Damned if it isn't Stanley!" he cried. "And with a beard! By the saints, man, you could now stand for the picture of Caucasian in the old geographies I used to study!"

They shook hands with great warmth.

Julian sank into a chair with a sigh. All as before! He looked about him. No, not quite—the old picture of Schopenhauer was missing.

Horn was talking to him, questioning him. And in the midst of his answers he was assailed by the oppressive realization of his perfidy. He had no

right there. He was practicing a deception. And he knew that to do so further was impossible to him. . . .

He arose sadly. Horn stared at him.

"I must go," . . . said Julian, in a low voice.

"What the devil!" Horn cried.

Julian looked at him with eyes of intense melancholy.

"I have no right here," he said. "I shouldn't have come in. By the rules, I am no longer a member."

Horn looked his astonishment.

"No longer a member?"

"No. By the rules, I am no longer a member. Horn—I'm—I'm *married!* . . ."

There was a moment of silence and during the still there came over Horn's face the shadows of the memories of stern pursuits and of ultimate captures.

"By the rules," he parroted. "Not so, Stanley. We've had to change that rule, here!"

Julian leaned forward with a tense countenance.

"What do you mean?"

Horn swept the room with his eyes.

"You see how empty it is here!" he exclaimed. "You see that I'm alone!"

"Yes," said Julian, mystified. "Where are all the members?"

"Out shopping, or playing peekaboo with babies, or home—*with their wives!*" said Horn, bitterly.

THE SKY ROAD

By Leslie Nelson Jennings

THE roads of the world are gay roads,
And I have trod them all;
But O for the little winding road
My feet cannot recall!

The love of the world is long love
For those who have not gone
Loving the dust of the crooked road
That threads the eye of dawn.

The roads of the world are gay roads,
And gay the world goes by;
But O for the little road I lost
Somewhere against the sky!

THE more a man tells his wife he loves her, the more positive she is that he will fall in love with someone else if he has the opportunity.

THE INSULT

By John Hamilton

I AM grieved that I offended you last night, Marjorie.

* * *

Marjorie, beautiful, willow-woman, so slender, so lissome—

Whose hair gleams like the lights in Bénédictine—

Marjorie, with smooth white hands as soothing as the foam of freshly poured champagne—

Marjorie, whose eyes are as purple as ripe grapes and whose breath is as fragrant as Crême-de-menthe—

Last night the scintillating wines and sparkling liquors tempted me.

Last night I was drunk.

Marjorie, you stood by the large, dusty bust of Ludwig van Beethoven in the conservatory.

I was entranced by your beauty last night, Marjorie.

I bent over you to kiss you.

* * *

I am grieved that I offended you last night, Marjorie.

Last night I was drunk. . . .

It was not my intention to kiss Ludwig.

REST

By Sara Teasdale

WHEN the night folds us with its warm wings,
My tall strong lover hushes me;
While dusk unveiling all the stars,
Hushes the tired sea.

Let others tell the whole of love,
For me deep stillness is the best;
My songs are quenched against his lips,
Even my songs have rest.

A HUMORESQUE IN HAM

By Ben Hecht

I

THE name of Jim Sloan was powerful in Chicago. There was a certain familiar magic to the ring of it. Just as the name of De Maupassant evoked for the people of Chicago visions of lacy bedrooms, and the name of Cæsar visions of Ed. Pinaud's hair tonic, and the name of Pere Marquette visions of a bad railroad, so was the name of Jim Sloan also potent in the evoking of visions. People spoke his name and thought not of him but of a ham, a large ham, shaped like a lopsided, inverted mandolin and labelled *"Sloan's Premium Ham—The Best."*

This ham was Jim Sloan. To a few intimates there was a man who bore the name, who exercised himself in human activities, but to the people of Chicago there was no such person. There was only the ham. Outlined in electric lights this ham blazed above the night-hidden roofs of State Street. It gestured in the crowded cars. It grimaced in the newspapers. Magazines were full of its potent contours. It hung in the windows of butcher shops.

For sixty-two years the name of Sloan had meant the lithograph of a ham. That many years ago Mike Sloan had started killing pigs out around Thirty-ninth and Halsted streets. At first Mike Sloan had managed to kill only some ten or twelve pigs a day. But being a man of genius he had, in the course of time, risen to the height of killing 857 pigs a day. And thus, at the zenith of his career, he had died and been buried with all the pomp befitting the killer of 857 pigs every twenty-four hours. But the death of Mike Sloan had meant no respite for the pigs. To the contrary, Jim Sloan, his only son and inheritor of his wealth and genius, had leaped into the breach and upheld the family honor by taking the lives of 903 pigs every day of each year following Mike Sloan's interment.

Already the name of Sloan had become a ham. Now, after fifteen years, the ham had engraved itself on the consciousness of every nation of the earth. Certain modern minds knew that Jim Sloan also killed cows and sheep and owned a large section of South Water Street wherein butter, eggs and vegetables were sold. They were aware of him as a series of huge, ramshackle buildings surrounded by pens full of animals and reeking with blood, hides and fats. But in a world given to superficial perceptions, such rare discernment was for the minority.

"Sloan's Premium Ham—The Best" remained Jim Sloan and Jim Sloan remained a being worshiped and admired by the proletariat as a succulent, juicy ham shaped like the map of Africa and purchasable in all corners of the earth.

In his office on the second floor of the James Sloan & Company plant, Jim Sloan sat at a flat-topped mahogany desk and stared out of a carefully washed window. It was early afternoon of a gloomy Spring day. A gray-mustached man appeared in the door of the office and said in a precise and respectful voice:

"Mr. Archer wants to see you, Mr. Sloan."

"Can't see him," said Jim Sloan.

The man in the door looked for an instant perplexed.

"I beg your pardon, Mr. Sloan. "It's the Archer from the Brimstone Ranch. I think he's finally come around. He's had a break with Armour's, and I think . . ."

"Can't see him, Wilson," said Jim Sloan, without removing his eyes from the window. "Tell him to come tomorrow. I've important things to attend to."

Wilson hesitated and then, with a faithful sigh, removed himself from the door.

Jim Sloan remained staring out of the window. He was a man of forty, groomed and barbered into a creature becoming the poise and affluence of his estate. There was about his solid features and his portly figure, likewise, the decisiveness and power which the consciousness of "Sloan's Premium Ham—The Best" had brought in fifteen years. Men who had known Mike Sloan proclaimed the son somewhat softer, somewhat less pugnacious than the father. Nevertheless they perceived in him the same sterling genius which had enabled the father to begin killing ten hogs a day and die with a record of 857.

Encasing himself in a gray, light overcoat, Jim Sloan moved from his office. His passage down the long corridor, nodding here and there to gray-haired employés who sat among the two hundred and eighty-four desks within the main office enclosure, created, as always, a stir among the men and women bending over files, ledgers and letters. Although they saw him daily, Jim Sloan remained to them as aloof and unknown a creature as he was to the multitude which respected him in the name of a ham. They became conscious of themselves as a smear of atoms combining to complete the organism known as James Sloan & Company.

The odor of salt, freshly stripped hides, vats of blood and fats, enveloped Jim Sloan as he progressed down the broad steps of the red brick office building. In front of the door stood a clean and luxurious automobile. In this automobile Jim Sloan rode home.

For the first ten minutes the automobile bumped along over roads wet with the drippings from the carcass wagons. The sounds of a vast and orderly activity came to his ears. About him stretched a zigzagging world of wooden enclosures alive with silent, restless animals. Men in dirty white aprons and smeared overalls emerged suddenly from scores of gloomy doorways. Wagons piled high with the steaming semblance of cows, sheep and pigs criss-crossed in all directions. Overhead ran a network of wooden walks and the automobile was continually passing under puzzling and enormous scaffoldings.

But to Jim Sloan the scene was a curious blur, a familiar thing seen out of focus. His eyes took no account of the slaughter-houses and the pens, of the curving, trampled road. His nose apparently registered none of the flat, pungent and salty odors which hung, steam like, over the huge areas about him. His ears remained undisturbed by the clatter and shriek of the marvelous places in which 903 pigs were being put to the knife and 605 beef cattle adroitly tapped on the skull between each sunrise and each sunset. There was curious thought in Jim Sloan's brain and he remained lost in the elaboration of it as the automobile sped out of the rickety cross-streets on to the boulevard and spun leisurely northward towards Lake Shore Drive.

The sightseers, when they rode down Lake Shore Drive in the $1 round trip carryalls, were always bidden by the enterprising assistant charioteer to "gaze, ladies and gentlemen, on your left. The mansion we are now passing is the home of James Sloan, the man who makes The Ham. In that wonderful house lives James Sloan himself, his wife and daughter, Elizabeth." As the carryall rumbled on, the sightseers turned their necks and allowed their eyes to linger with casual fascination upon the place. Visions of large and tempting hams drifted before them and a sense of the curious incon-

gruity of life abided with them as they bestowed their itinerant attention upon succeeding objects. The thought of "Sloan's Premium Ham—The Best" having a home, moving about within four walls and sleeping in a bed, offered this incongruity.

II

JIM SLOAN entered his home on this gloomy spring day with an eager step. The stern and placid composure of his face gave way suddenly to a certain brightness of his eyes, a certain movement of his lips which made him appear younger and less important than the Jim Sloan who had walked down the corridor from his office. A servant materialized in the spacious, tapestry-hung hall of the Sloan home and assumed charge of Sloan's gray light overcoat and hat. Rubbing his hands together and delivering himself of a cheerful cough, Jim Sloan walked hurriedly toward an open door.

The room which he entered was spacious and gray-walled. It had the air of being a chamber devoted to utter rarity and exclusiveness. It was the music-room of the Sloan home. It was a cheerless and magnificent *salle*, furnitured with forbidding chairs and cabinets, and distinguished by the presence of a grand piano, five massively framed oil paintings of famous composers, a glass-covered case in which reposed an assortment of curious instruments, and a short, wiry-faced man who resembled a monk because of a peculiarly located bald spot, and whose name was Professor Enrico Sansone. Godowsky had played in this room. Grainger had sat before this grand piano. Paderewski and Josef Hofmann had looked out these long, shining windows at the stretch of lawn. Zimbalist and Kreisler, Ysaye and Heifetz had likewise trod these ivory-tinted and golden-gleaming carpets. And yet it was a room to make a musician like Enrico Sansone uncomfortable. Despite the massively framed portraits of Mozart, Beethoven, Schumann, Liszt and Wagner, there was no music in the room. Despite the ebony spread of the piano there was no hint of melody about the precincts.

Thus Professor Enrico Sansone turned with a fretful air. He spoke like one privileged to say things. He said:

"Ah, Mr. Slowan, you come late."

Jim Sloan nodded his head and smiled.

"It's all right, Professor," he answered. "I'll make it up by surprising you this time in another respect."

"Ver' well," said the professor. "To work!"

With another rub of his hands and a spontaneous clearing of his throat, Jim Sloan walked to a corner of the room and from one of the cabinets extracted a black leather violin case. From the case he brought forth a violin, after removing a brocaded velvet covering. It was a Cremona, low-chinned, full of garnet and russet shadings.

Professor Sansone, his hands thrust in his coat pockets, his legs apart, watched enigmatically the operations attending the tuning of the violin. As Sloan placed it under his chin and tucked his head to one side, the professor cried:

"No, no. The exercises first."

The look of an aggrieved boy passed over Jim Sloan's face.

"I would like to show you the *Legende*," he murmured.

"The exercises first," repeated Professor Sansone, "and then you can show me, Mr. Slowan."

With a grim air, the little Italian walked into a corner of the room, removed from the shadows an elaborately carved wooden music stand, placed it beside the piano and dressed it with a large green folio labeled "David's Violin Studies." Jim Sloan faced the stand and began the execution of a page arranged for the bewilderment of all violinists. For ten minutes the endless arpeggios continued, interrupted only by sudden exclamations of the professor. At their conclusion the

little Italian became full of fury.

"What have you studied?" he cried. "It ees worse, ver' much worse. Your left hand is like a cow."

Jim Sloan winced at the word.

"But, professor," he remonstrated weakly.

"No, no, no. I tell you you must practise scales, exercises. The *Legende* ees nothing. Thees ees ever' thing. Play heem once more."

A glutton for punishment, Professor Sansone threw himself into one of the forbidding chairs and sat stoically silent as Jim Sloan went through the jarring double stops, the intricate and unharmonious passages of the two pages before him.

When he had finished the second time, the little Italian again arose, walked the length of the chamber, frowned upon the portrait of Wagner, and exclaimed:

"Your fingers are like a child. They have no power. Your wrist ees stiff. Your right arm ees cramp all the time."

Jim Sloan, holding the Cremona by its neck, looked appealingly at the little Italian.

"I've put in an hour a day," he explained.

"And what ees that?" cried Sansone. "One hour! Oh, God, one hour! How many hours you spend keeling pigs? If you wish to be violinist you cannot spend twelve hours keeling pigs and one hour keeling music. Oh, God! One hour!"

A look of poignant shame came into Sloan's face. He shifted uneasily on his feet and seemed at a loss for answer.

"I guess you're right," he finally said. "But I promise to make it two hours."

A grin spread the lips of the little Italian.

"The *Legende*," he commanded.

Professor Enrico Sansone sat staring out of the window of the Sloan mansion, his back turned upon Jim Sloan, the packer. The slow, melodious gusto of Wieniawski's little piece filled the gray room.

"It is not bad," Professor Sansone murmured to himself, "like an earnest boy. Too stiff, too slippery."

He continued listening with a frown as the music progressed.

Jim Sloan, standing beside the piano, let his soul run out of his fingers. It was not the soul of Jim Sloan, the meat packer, that came thus to the strings. It was rather a nebulous and awkward thing, which threw itself feverishly, if impotently, into the doublestop trio, which whinnied dolorously on the high E, which gurgled languourously on the low B. It was a soul which had never known the power of "Sloan's Premium Ham—The Best." It was a strange, frostbitten, crippled, spavined soul, airing itself in the unfamiliar luxury of song.

There was a Jim Sloan who bartered in South Water Street, who swung deals involving one million eggs, who sat smoking, swearing and spitting at directors' meetings, who fought and intrigued over pigs grunting obliviously in far places of the earth, who excited himself over shipping marines and international contracts, who, in short, was "Sloan's Premium Ham—The Best," vitalized. But a curious thing had happened to that Jim Sloan.

Unrest had fought its way through the labyrinth of pig pens and office corridors into his heart. Mike Sloan had found no time for unrest. Mike had exhausted his genius enthroning himself behind 857 dead pigs a day. Not so Jim, his son. The slaughter-house was no longer the battle-ground for undiluted energies in the Sloan & Company plant. Efficiency had removed Jim Sloan further and further from the stress of actual conflict. It was as if 903 pigs came into his life daily and committed suicide. He signed documents for their disposal. He negotiated sterile though impressive contracts. He became bustlingly idle, pompously abstract. He began to feel ennuied at thirty-five. His wife and daughter, moving in state from capital to capital, graced his vision two months out of the year. For two months he buried

himself in distracting leisure among men who danced and gambled, and women who maintained a mysterious excitement in their lives.

It was at a concert five years ago at one of his summer homes that Jim Sloan had discovered his soul. From some hidden and incongruous depths of his being had been suddenly liberated a desire to make music. Since that day he had, like a man conducting an awkward liaison, given himself to a secret dream. Daily Jim Sloan, the meat packer, had become more and more of a husk, and Jim Sloan who sat enraptured at concerts, who sawed on his Cremona in his empty house, who aspired to things he dared not even name to himself, became the reality.

Standing now playing the *Legende*, he was conscious of a curious warmth in his body. Lost in the sweet intensity that music making brought to him, he remained unaware of the flatted tremolos that issued into the room, of the slurred cadenza that deepened the frown on Professor Sansone's face. With an amorousness which rendered him almost grotesque, he gave himself over to the production of sound. He finished and stood flushed and silent, regarding the back of the little Italian.

Professor Sansone, turning, hesitated a moment. In the eyes of his pupil he saw a light which confused him.

"That ees ver' fine," he whispered.

Jim Sloan laughed softly.

"I thought you'd like it," he said. Both men became silent. At last Sloan resumed.

"Tell me candidly, Professor, what are my chances?"

"Chances?" murmured Sansone. "There ees no such thing as chances. Practise, Mr. Slowan. That ees all which make perfec'."

"I mean," said Sloan slowly, "have I got it in me? Is there any hope of my becoming . . . becoming a . . ."

Jim Sloan paused and drew a deep breath.

"Becoming . . . becoming," cried the professor abruptly. "What ees it you wish to become? If you practise you become able to play the violin. Ees that not enough?"

As his pupil remained silent, Professor Sansone bethought himself suddenly of the $40 he received for each hour spent in the Sloan mansion, and a kindly smile lighted his wiry face.

"Ah, Mr. Slowan," he added, "if you started to play as a boy you would now be one great violinist. But you start late and who knows? Perhaps in five more years, perhaps in seven, you will be an artist. You have it in you, Mr. Slowan."

III

None of the people who saw and knew Jim Sloan had ever suspected his devotion to violin playing, had ever imagined for an instant that he was other than a quietly domineering force in the finances of the western world. Through this world which knew him as the shrewd and compelling dealer in cattle, grain and produce, Jim Sloan moved, thinking intently of passages from serenades and concertos, going over in his mind the fingering of curiously contrived exercises. His dream seemed in no way to impair his efficiency as head of Sloan & Company. With a cunning almost automatic, he indited letters, oversaw reports, made suggestions, attended conferences.

Jim Sloan's ambition to play the violin was in the beginning devoid of any desire to achieve public recognition as an artist. It was at the outset no more than a dogged and mechanical longing to master an unknown field, just as Mike, his revered parent, and founder of the Premium Ham, had mastered the then chartless field of wholesale slaughter. But as the years progressed, Jim Sloan's preoccupation with his new and intriguing craft became confused with disturbing fancies. At night he lay awake in his soft bed visioning himself upon a stage, he and his violin. He saw himself as an arresting figure of genius, as a virtuoso whose name inspired awe in the minds of men. True to his promise to San-

sone, he increased his daily practise to two hours. The little Italian, calling twice a week at the Sloan mansion, saw developing under his tutelage one of those tragedies of misplaced effort which to a great teacher is like unto crowns of thorns.

It was at the close of one of his lessons late that spring that Jim Sloan first heard the curious name of Slovel Selzow. The little Italian, after much frowning, spoke it.

"There ees a boy who work in your company," he said, "by name Slovel Selzow, a Lithuanian. Have you heard of heem?"

Jim Sloan smiled, bethinking himself suddenly of some two thousand creatures who might or might not bear the name of Slovel Selzow.

"No," he said.

"Too bad," Sansone exclaimed. "He ees one great violin player."

"Is that so?" inquired Jim Sloan carelessly.

"It ees," snapped the little Italian. "And because he have no money to learn, this great artist must keel pigs."

A frown passed over Sloan's face. There was in the Italian's voice something which penetrated the placid indifference he had always held toward the toilers who brought into the world "Sloan's Premium Ham—The Best."

"I give heem one lesson now and then," Sansone went on, "but I cannot afford ver' often. And he can come only on Sunday when he ees not at work, keeling pigs."

"A Lithuanian butcher who plays the violin," mused Jim Sloan, "would be interesting."

Five years ago Jim Sloan might have, with certain magnificent gestures, scribbled a check which would have insured the future of Slovel Selzow, killer of pigs. This afternoon he remained staring with narrowed eyes out of the window of the music-room. After a pause he spoke slowly:

"I know what you expect, Professor. But I am not a philanthropist. If this pig killer is a genius let him be one. We're both in the same boat, he and I. He hasn't any more to contend with, killing pigs, than I have running the plant. I'm asking help from no one."

"You," began Enrico Sansone and stopped. Jim Sloan caught the word and the tone of it.

"How old is this violinist?" he asked brusquely.

"Twenty year old," said Sansone, recovering his calm.

"Twenty years old, eh? And a genius? Well, Professor, if he shows himself a good killer of pigs I'll promote him to a dresser. I'm not employing violinists."

This somewhat slight conversation marked a strange turning point in Jim Sloan's life. The name Slovel Selzow somehow stuck in his imaginings. With it the tone of the professor remained. As he passed down the lumpy, worn road of Packingtown to the office of the Sloan plant the next day, he eyed the ramshackle and monstrous buildings in which animals were suffering death and dismemberment with an odd sensation of interest. Within one of them worked this Slovel Selzow. Several young men emerged from the doorways and hurried in their overalls and aprons across the road. Any of them might be Selzow, he thought, watching them as the automobile in which he was riding bore him serenely forward.

There was something about the idea of a young Lithuanian pig killer aspiring to be an artist of the violin that exercised a fascination over Jim Sloan's thought, as he moved through the routine of his work that day. For a number of succeeding days the idea abided with him.

At first he thought only of Slovel Selzow with an impersonal speculation. He pictured him standing on the blood-soaked platform, knife in hand. He pictured the huge wheel revolving like some monstrous rack with four pigs always dangling by their hind feet from as many projections. It was the duty of the killer of pigs to slash their throats as they revolved slowly. He pictured Slovel Selzow doing this me-

chanically callous thing. And when he had done with his impersonal picturings, the words of Professor Sansone would come to his thought.

" . . . this great artist must keel pigs!"

In the course of two weeks Slovel Selzow became an inspiration to Jim Sloan. No longer was there anything impersonal about the Lithuanian pig killer. Logical in the presence of his friends, always shrewd and controlled in the society of his fellow men, Jim Sloan reserved for his secret and dream world the caprice of an infant. Things which came into this world, little things of utter unimportance, uncentered him more than the most strategic difficulties which came before him at his desk in the Sloan plant. Thus Slovel Selzow, whom he had never seen, suddenly acquired for Jim Sloan the depressing characteristics of some violent rival.

Inspired by this notion, he telegraphed his wife that he would not have time to spend two months this year at their summer home. He would show Slovel Selzow who was the greater genius. He would reveal this matter to Sansone. He would, above all, make certain of it to himself. There could be no half measures. He thought with elation of the eight-hour day which all faithful killers of pigs were forced to put in at the Sloan plant. The work was tiring. Slovel Selzow could not survive it. Yet it was no more demanding than his own work.

These were the almost grotesque cogitations which darkened Jim Sloan's brow during the early days of summer and which kindled in his eye exultant lights. Professor Sansone was the first to notice the change which had overtaken the famous packer. Instead of an enthusiastic dilettante, the good professor found suddenly on his hands a creature consecrated heart and soul to some strangely pathetic ideal. The half-hearted technique, which his pupil had been wont to exhibit in the rendition of the finger exercises, was replaced now by a desperate attention to detail, an arresting fidelity to bowing and the sliding of the wrist. A certain improvement was achieved. But, sitting one day late in summer in the familiar music-room, listening to his pupil execute a Viotti concerto, Sansone mused sadly upon the oddities of life.

"He is impossible," he murmured to himself. "He has no soul. No fire. Why does a man without soul or fire seek to play the violin? He is like a fat baby. He is no good. God, what a waste of time, what a waste of money! What a waste of ambition! And Slovel must kill pigs six days a week. Yet Slovel is a genius. I must make the boy an artist. Six months and he will be ready. This fat baby could play sixty years and not create a note."

Aloud, when Jim Sloan had finished, he said:

"Ah, Mr. Slowan, you are working hard. There is improvement. It ees fine."

Jim Sloan smiled with grimness. He understood, in some crevice of his brain, the antagonism which Sansone cherished toward him. To the professor he, Jim Sloan, was a brash and insolent interloper, a pork butcher de luxe invading with dripping boots the fields of art. Sansone was necessary, however. He was the best teacher in the country. And he, Jim Sloan, needed no further inspiration than the peculiar hate which had sprung up in his heart.

For Jim Sloan had reached the final altitude of hate. He had achieved an enemy with whom he had hourly to contend. The enemy was Slovel Selzow. By a series of distorted and bizarre imaginings Slovel Selzow had grown to Sloan to embody the mockery of fate—a phrase which he left unexplained. He reasoned only that he would not permit a Lithuanian butcher to surpass him playing the violin. Hour after hour he harassed the echoes with page upon page of Kreutzer and David, De Beriot and Viotti. For the two months of his usual vacation, Jim Sloan absented himself from his huge

business and, closeted five hours a day in the music-room, pursued his monomania, his driving ambition, his determination to become now a great and overwhelming master of the violin.

IV

PROFESSOR ENRICO SANSONE had never mentioned the name of Slovel Selzow to Jim Sloan after their first talk of him. It was thus through the medium of an artistic lithograph inserted within one of the glass cases in the lobby of Orchestra Hall that Jim Sloan first learned of the great event. The lithograph eyed by Sloan as he was emerging one evening from a symphony concert, accompanied by two friends, revealed the face of a young man with a shock of uncombed hair and the pronounced features of a Slav. Above and beneath the face was printed:

Prof. Enrico Sansone

Presents

SLOVEL SELZOW

in a Violin Recital

September 23.

When he had quitted his friends, who chanced to be social acquaintances of his wife, Jim Sloan walked bewilderedly past his home. He had dismissed his chauffeur. He walked now along the lake front, a sharp, gloomy wind sweeping him from the water. As he walked a furious emotion confused him. He had failed. Sansone had not bidden him to give a recital, to make a début. Sansone had played with him for the few dollars there was in it. Slovel Selzow, the enemy, the creature who killed pigs and stood covered with blood on a platform eight hours a day, was to come into his own as an artist. He, Jim Sloan, was to remain as a butcher de luxe.

As always, the situation presented itself to him with neither lucidity of thought nor analysis. His pride now, as he walked, choked him. The night was a tempestuous, wounded thing to him. The gloom of it on the water was like the gloom in his soul. The wind sweeping him was like the aimless wildness of his thought. Gradually Slovel Selzow outlined himself before him as a man who had stolen from him his dreams, robbed him of something fearsomely precious.

That night as he lay in his bed Jim Sloan wept, "Sloan's Premium Ham—The Best" wept because it could not play the violin as well as a Lithuanian butcher boy. During the month that preceded the concert Sloan never touched the Cremona. It lay gathering dust and uncovered on the piano where he had thrust it one evening. The 23d of September became for him a day of dark forebodings. He thought of it as of some hideous climax to his life.

At his desk Jim Sloan was the silent, imperturbable chief he had always been. As by some last mockery of fate, the business of the Sloan plant expanded during the month. A meeting of directors yielded a dividend more luscious than any in the history of the institution. Jim Sloan, glowering and domineering, recalling in this exaggerated guise of his the contours and manners of his parent, Mike, presided at this meeting, made a brief address concerning his satisfaction in the matter, and returned to his empty home that night thinking blackly of a Lithuanian named Slovel Selzow. A letter from his wife, awaiting him, served only to increase the darkness in his heart. In the letter were ridiculous sentences concerning tardy trains and unsatisfactory hotels and banal personages encountered in London. He tore it up and shoved the pieces in his pocket. The 23d of September was a week off.

The people in Chicago who attended concerts had cultivated a faith in Enrico Sansone. He had in the past revealed to them notable performers. Like Campanini, he was one of the rallying points of dinner conversation and one of the boasts of the élite. Thus on the night of the 23d Orchestra Hall was well filled. Professor Sansone had

announced in an interview published in all the music columns that he would stake his reputation on the genius of this, his latest find.

A flutter of applause greeted Slovel Selzow as he walked stiffly out of the wings and took his position to the left of the piano. He was a tall, stocky youth with a large head. He played a Beethoven concerto.

Through the spaces of the hall which had stirred to the echoes of Thomas and Bull, of Joachim and Ysaye, of Wieniawski and Wilhelmj, throbbed the music of a new master. Clear and resonant, possessed of a strange urge and a stranger repression, tone poured from Slovel Selzow's violin. For moments it was the sound of seraphim singing shrilly at the feet of God, for moments it was the *passionata* of abandoned souls. But always, clear and possessed, the music reared and plunged against the hearts of the silent listeners. There were groups of violinists in the audience. These sat with heads lowered, listening to their dreams embodied in sound, perceiving their ambitions issuing from the strings of the violin on the stage.

When it was over a demonstration occurred seldom witnessed in the famous hall. Men and women leaped to their feet and cheered. Others cried:

"Selzow . . . Selzow! Encore!"

On the wave of this tumult which filled the auditorium, the name of Slovel Selzow swept triumphantly into the world. The boy who had stood on the platform in the slaughter-house sticking four pigs in the throat every ten minutes became an idol at whose feet the world rushed to lay its love and worship.

The door of the hall opened and a single man emerged. The tumult was still at its height. The cries of "Encore! Encore!" were still rising. Jim Sloan walked through the lighted and deserted lobby and into the avenue. People who did not know Slovel Selzow was playing the violin that night were passing in the avenue. Jim Sloan joined them. He had left his light overcoat behind. He walked with his hat in his hand for a space and then automatically placed it on his head.

A curious fever burned in Jim Sloan's blood. He had heard Slovel Selzow play. He raised his eyes to the night. He had walked out of the avenue into the narrow parkway which skirted the lake on the Drive in which he lived. Standing above the water, the wind pressed against him and toppled his hat from his head. His emotions were unaccountable. A pain throbbed in his heart and the sound of Slovel Selzow's playing uncoiled in his brain like threads of fire. From his eyes came tears. For moments he stood facing the night-hidden water. Then he turned and with eyes raised still, gazed at the sky blurred with yellow, which covered the streets behind him. High against the night, outlined in a brilliant necklace of electric bulbs, he saw, blazing above the roof tops, the effulgent and triumphant sign,

Sloan's Premium Ham—The Best Buy It Now!

A block away a street-organ was playing "The Justine Johnstone Glide." Jim Sloan looked into the water. For several minutes he was immovable. Then, shrugging his shoulders, he turned upon his heel and started slowly home. . . .

CONSIDERATION: treating your friends as if they were your creditors.

I OBJECT!

By George B. Jenkins, Jr.

LUCILLIA, when I observe your continued faithlessness, when I meditate upon your unconcealed flirtations, when I ponder upon the frequency of your brief attachments, I am appalled by the shallowness of your emotions. Surely all women are not as changeable, as fickle, as unstable as you.

Yet when I compare those women who are constant, who are faithful, whose eyes are fixed upon one man, and one only, I am content. For these women are, always and without exception, of a singularly frightful homeliness; they are as alluring as a cigar stub, as exquisite as a garage, as tempting as a protested check. And when I gaze upon your chummy face, I become jaunty. Better one kiss from your fragrant lips than a dozen from a mouth that resembles a mousetrap.

Still, appreciating as I do your numerous opportunities, understanding the lure of the limousines that are placed at your disposal, comprehending your feminine love of display, I immediately afterwards become dissatisfied. For you persist in flaunting your conquests before my eyes. And I object! Any husband would.

TERTIUM QUID

By Alan Laird

LAST night as I left you, lady,
I said: "This cannot be.
I shall be damned and forget her,
And the devil shall drink with me."

But stepping into the night,
Great God! I could not forget,
For the old dream rose and towered
And crushed me under it.

REVENGE

By Douglas Turney

BACK of all of Perdoz' troubles there was only Perdoz himself. And back of himself was his love of mystery.

As some people are in love with love, Perdoz was in love with the mysterious, although Perdoz himself was really quite simple and understandable. And he would have been comprehensible to himself, had he cared to know himself personally. But he didn't. He wouldn't have enjoyed that, at all. That would have taken all of the life out of life for him. In fact, there would have been no Perdoz, as he was, had it not been for Perdoz, as he was, which may seem rather a foolish declaration, but which really is quite as simple and understandable as Perdoz himself.

To aid Perdoz, as he called himself in Los Angeles (although that was not nearly so near his name as was d'Albert) in his making a mystery of himself and of his life were two of his native qualities: his frankness, which, to the sly, seemed the apogee of superslyness—a conclusion with which Perdoz had duly reckoned. And his politeness, which, to the impolite, which means almost everybody, was something to be looked upon with suspicion, indeed—another result which Perdoz obtained with arithmetical precision, after going through the delightfully simple process of adding two to two.

At this point, Perdoz' analysis of either himself or of others stopped, making Perdoz what he was. To be more explicit, this was where Perdoz' analysis of himself stopped permanently, although somewhat later on he attempted to dissect and scrutinize, through the microscope of love and hate, so finely mingled that he knew not which was which, the soul of one other.

When Perdoz, with youth in his heart and a youthful moustache on his lip, left France for America, he determined to be an American. That determination provided thought and entertainment for him across the turbulent Atlantic and it was uppermost when he reached Los Angeles on a morning so glorious that every member of the Chamber of Commerce, walking abroad, enthusiastically slapped himself on the back.

Perdoz, with no English to speak of nor with, was stepping along Marchessault street, looking for the Hotel de Gap, of which another Frenchman he had met on the train had told him, but he was really thinking of how to become a good American. He concluded that first of all he should have as his own a good American name. But how should he get it, since he knew none? That was the riddle. But why not find one? he asked himself. So he decided to take for his own the first he found that he liked.

And then he looked around him, in search of the hotel, and what should he see but a photograph of a handsome man. The photograph, which was a large one, was alone in a window. It had been placed there as a decoy to other handsome men by the photographer who, like a spider watching for conceited flies, presided over a small studio back of the window.

Under the picture he saw the phrase "Per Doz.," and had he gone closer he would have learned, had he understood English, that a dozen photographs

in the same style and of the same size as that of the handsome man could be had for ten dollars. But he didn't understand English and so it was just as well, perhaps, that he wasted no steps to obtain a closer view of the handsome man. Still, if he had, he might not have done what he did. He mistook the "Per Doz." for the man's name, and he instantly decided, since its apparent owner was seemingly all that a man should be, that he also would thereafter be known to the world as Perdoz.

And it was under that name he registered when he eventually reached the Hotel de Gap.

Of course, he didn't pronounce it "Pur Duz," as do the people who are in the trade and the majority of those who patronize them, which made some difference, and added to the mystery which then and there Perdoz began to construct of himself and his life.

But for what is a mystery except to be revealed? Had Perdoz been asked that question, he would have kept in character and made some such polite reply as, "Yes, for what, indeed?" but, had he asked it himself of himself, he unhesitatingly would have answered, "Nothing."

All of which gives some little insight, perhaps, into Perdoz' congenital liability to troubles of mystery, and explains, at least in part, why I am so familiar with the mystery of Perdoz' past, the mystery of Perdoz' present and, yes, I verily believe, the mystery of Perdoz' future, too.

He told me all about himself with that frankness which others either disregarded or discounted. But I believed. There was a part, however, that I would not have believed of him, had he not told me it himself. I am certain, too, there was a time when he would not have believed it himself, especially *of* himself. It was so—well, it showed, perhaps, that, after all, Perdoz had one really inexplicable quality. He admits he was wicked and that he has been well punished for it, too. And he thinks revenge should be exacted of someone, preferably of the someone who is punishing him for the wickedness of which for a time she was quite ignorant, although she was its victim.

Because I chanced to believe him when he was frank and tried to return his politeness with the best imitation I could muster, Perdoz, so he told me in time, conceived a liking for me, and still later decided to reveal to me the greatest of the mysteries with which he had surrounded himself. Whether this was his way of honoring me or simply because of the ordinary human need of telling everything to somebody and selecting the most promising, trustworthy person available, I do not know. I think he thought he was doing me an honor. I also think he was in great need of a confidant.

II

He began his confidences with the inconsequential, not to say boring one concerning his extreme domestic joy. His wife, he told me then, was a simply enjoyable creature who made his home life the nearest thing imaginable to heavenly happiness. As he went carefully over my face to give me the close shave—(yes, it was in his little barber shop in Aliso street that I became acquainted with him)—that he insisted my good appearance demanded, although I insisted it made my neck sore, he gave me rather intimate details of his perfect mating with Virginie.

"I love her so she is so exquisite!" he exclaimed, gesticulating with razor in hand and with an abandonment to both emotion and motion that made me fear for my jugular veins. "And our baby—oh, some day you shall see our little baby!"

I tried to express the rapture which a sight of his offspring would give me and succeeded so well that the next day he told me the same thing all over again. And the next and the next, for many weeks, until I began to believe I would have to seek out another barber.

Then, one day, he seemed less joyous in manner and decidedly less buoy-

ant in expressing himself. I asked him the cause.

"My Virginie is changing," he replied, mournfully. "Oh, I wish I could express myself as well as I can cut hair!"

"Changing?" I inquired, idly, knowing he expected me to make some sort of reply. "How?"

"She is getting the listening ear and the watching eye!" he answered. "She was so different at first. Why, then, she knew nothing about—about—! Why, she never had read even 'Things a Young Boy Ought to Know'!"

"To the pure," I began, banally, "all—"

"Yes, I know," he interrupted. "'To the pure almost all things are impure.' But then she had not sunk to purity, All her knowledge then was of the kind which keeps a girl ignorant. She wouldn't have known sex even if it had been nude. Now she is getting so that she appreciates nothing higher than the body."

"But what has she done?" I inquired.

"Done? I will try to tell you. She has taken our marriage license out of her trunk and hung it over our bed, where all who might enter may see that the law, as well as she, sanctions my caresses. How could she be so—? I can't find the word! I asked her 'Why?' and she said, 'So, if anyone should come in, she would see it is lawful.' 'Do you expect a multitude to come into our bedroom?' I asked her. 'Do you doubt God has sanctioned our union?' 'Oh, no,' she replied. 'Do you think your women friends will doubt?' I went on. And she said, 'Maybe not.' 'Then why?' I continued to ask. And what did she answer all night but that astounding word, *'because.'* Now what can you do with a woman, especially a simple-minded wife and mother, like Virginie?"

"And what *did* you do about it?" I asked.

"Do?" echoed Perdoz. "What could I do? Nothing. I told her to go to—to—to Nineveh and Tyre, and she asked why she should go there and tire when she grew quite tired enough here with me. And she was so innocent, too. But I shall have my *revanche!*—my revenge!"

"Revenge! On your wife! And for that!" I exclaimed.

"Yes, on Virginie and for that!" he volleyed. "You don't know the danger to which she exposes herself! If she isn't careful, the whole neighborhood will shame her. And then what will become of our little baby?"

"Shame her for having a marriage certificate?"

"It was a marriage license I named," replied Perdoz.

"So that's the kind of a man you are!" I exclaimed, with the proper accent of horror.

"I see I shall have to tell you," he answered. "I had not meant to say so much. But, since I have gone so far, I must go still further, else you will mistake me for another kind of man."

"In the beginning, when I first came over here," he went on, "I knew very little. At first I could not even speak English. Of course, now I speak it most as well as anybody—better than many, maybe?"

He stopped for a compliment, which I quickly rendered, thinking it really due him.

Then he went on to tell me how he took the name of Perdoz, laughing a little at his own ingenuousness. Then he told how he had become a barber and of other things with the interminably meaningless details of which even a member of that craft like Perdoz can be guilty.

And then came his account of his meeting with Virginie.

"Oh, she was the deliciously ignorant thing and I loved her at once," he declared. "She had no mother, and her father was of the Voltaire breed in religion, so she knew little of the church. I knew as little and cared less than that. So when I spoke of love and marriage, nothing was said about a priest.

"We went together to the license bu-

reau, as the law requires. And I, well even I, then thought with Virginie that when we held up our hands and swore we were telling the truth about our ages, we were passing through the marriage ceremony.

"So we went home and began our life together. Virginie put the license away in the trunk. I forgot all about it, just as a husband would, for I thought I was one. But when the baby was coming I learned that we should have taken the license to a justice or a minister and obtained a certificate.

"But that was too late to tell it to a girl like Virginie. She would have expired of shame, especially in her condition. And I thought it over and decided it could do no harm. It made our life more of a mystery and it pleased me. Besides, I thought that if I ever grew tired of Virginie, I could simply point to the license and tell her good-bye. Not that I wanted to leave her or believed I ever would want to, but the knowledge left me free to love as no husband, bound by law, can really love long. And I was happy!

"Then the baby was born. It was delightful to be a father. I was so filled with joy that I even thought of marrying Virginie, but I could not bear the thought that the mother of my child should be told by me that its father was so ignorant that he didn't know when he was married. No woman should know that the man she loves knows as little as she—that makes for the end of love.

"And by not telling her what I had found out, I had my own proof—in that little mystery—that I knew more than she. And in these days, few men can prove they know more than their women.

"But now, with that license where any woman may see, I fear she will find it out. Then I shall have to tell her that I did it on purpose and keep her respect, while I may lose her love. I cannot marry her now—it would put me in a wrong light to myself. And the baby who now has my name, will have none at all.

"If she isn't careful, I shall have my revenge on Virginie for causing me all this anguish!"

The intensity of his perturbation was only too plain. Although secretly diverted by the distortion he had made of his home life and the weird view he took of it, I tried to persuade him that the manly thing to do was to set matters right by as quiet a legal marriage as possible.

But my argument was futile.

"I can never do that, no matter what happens," he asserted. "What, then, would become of my revenge?"

"But supposing you exact your revenge?" I asked. "Don't you know that in the eyes of the law Virginie is your wife now? After you live for a time with a woman, who is known as your wife, she becomes your common-law wife, whether you will or not."

"Still," persisted Perdoz, "should I cease to love her, I could tell her there was a time when she was not my wife—not even my common-law wife. And that will be my revenge if she is foolish enough to find out."

The next day he brought up the matter again.

"I have decided," he told me. "When the baby is old enough, I shall have revenge upon Virginie for becoming my common-law wife."

"It's as much your fault as hers," I replied, tartly.

"But by being what she has become, she has destroyed my freedom to love her," he replied. "And for *that* I shall have my revenge!"

III

TIME ran into months and once in a while I would see the baby at the shop, a toddling nuisance to Perdoz' customers, as he was always stopping in the midst of ministrations to them to clasp it to his breast and kiss it. And now and then Virginie, now a young woman with an alert face, would drop in to take the child home with her.

"When the baby grows up," Perdoz

would mutter with soft fierceness, as he bent over me and waved his razor, "when the baby grows up. Then I shall have my revenge on her!"

A year went by and Perdoz, with the hopeful light in his eyes that prisoners show as the ends of their terms approach, watched with obvious joy the growth of the child.

"It will soon grow up," Perdoz would say to me. "It will not be so long, after all, maybe. Then I shall have my revenge."

But soon I felt certain it was despair I saw in his eyes, dully visible where hope had been. I asked him about it.

"Another baby is coming," he said, dismally. "But after that!"

So it was not so very long before there was another toddler annoying Perdoz' patrons. But Perdoz loved it.

"My darling," he would say to it, as he held it close, "my darling! Oh, when you grow up!"

So I knew what he was still planning.

One day, while I was showing polite interest in the children, Virginie came into the shop to take them home. Perdoz introduced me. Her way home and mine were the same for a short distance and I walked with her.

I let her choose the subject. She chose Perdoz. Her seeming frankness almost equaled his. And her confidences made me want to hold up my hand to stop her, as policemen do to halt traffic.

"We are so happy," she began, thrusting the information upon me. "We have the nicest quarrels. I always make him ask me to forgive him. And I always pretend to, although I can't really, because there is nothing to forgive."

"Do you think that is quite safe?" I asked lightly, although I felt that she might possibly hear in my banter the warning I believed she needed. "Maybe he just pretends to want to be forgiven."

"That's just it," she returned. "That's why our quarrels are so nice. He just pretends and I just pretend."

"Then he doesn't really care whether you pretend to forgive him?" I queried. "For some reason he just pretends, although he doesn't know that your anger is just pretense?"

For a moment she was thoughtful.

"Oh, no, no!" she burst out. "Oh, surely that couldn't be. No, no!"

I made no reply, knowing none to make.

"He loves the babies so," she said soon. Then, suddenly:

"And he shall always have babies to love!"

By chance or her maneuvering, I saw Virginie quite frequently after that. Of course, I usually dropped into Perdoz' shop late in the afternoon, on the way home, and she might reasonably have been supposed to have left the children with their father, while she went downtown on some errand, and merely to have been dropping in at that time to take them home for dinner and bed. Still I thought it odd that I so suddenly should see her so often, when for so long I had not even known her.

Once when she and I were walking together the brief distance that was our common way home, she displayed unusual interest in my acquaintance with Perdoz.

"You are my husband's good friend?" she asked.

I lied.

"Yes," I replied, "I think a great deal of him."

"And he tells you all about himself, no doubt?" she went on, inquiringly.

"Is there much to tell?" I countered.

She smiled, somewhat joylessly.

"Ah, I see you *are* his good friend," she remarked.

Again I sought refuge in *double entendre*, disliking to proclaim myself a friend to anyone to whom I was not and yet hesitating about trying to explain to her my emotionless sentiment toward Perdoz.

"I trust I am not his enemy," I said.

"Could you be a friend, just a friend, to a *woman?*" she asked, looking me straight in the eyes. "To a woman in trouble?"

"I could try," I answered.

Her face and indeed her whole body,

although she carried the smaller child in one arm and the other was dragging at a hand, expressed intensity of feeling. Her voice, too, was tense, when she said:

"Then tell me: If some one you loved and trusted had put you in such a position that— Oh, I can't say it! But after you found it out and you discovered a way to keep the wrong ever fresh in his mind, even if that way were through little children that he loved, would you take that revenge for the wrong?"

I knew then that Virginie had discovered the difference between a marriage license and a marriage certificate and I wondered if she had learned it alone, for she was not the ignorant girl she must have been when Perdoz and she went to the courthouse, or whether the information had been given her by the neighbor women, as Perdoz had feared.

"In my opinion," I replied, at last, "revenge is a waste of energy, especially if the one who exacts it must suffer as much as the one who is its object. Why don't you demand of your—that is, of Mr. Perdoz—"

"I see you know," she interrupted, bitterly. "Then he has already suffered. I am glad."

"It seems too bad that—"

"You needn't answer my question," she broke in, again. "I asked it merely to learn whether Perdoz had suffered through my revenge. It is good that he has. But he shall suffer more. For years more he shall suffer."

"For years?"

"Yes, for years. For he loves his children—I'll give him credit for that. And he wouldn't leave them for anything in the world. And as long as there is one of them too young to be taken from its mother, even by the law, he will hurry home at night to it—and my revenge!"

IV

WHAT a mess Perdoz' mystery had made it! Here was an ideal father growing to hate his children's mother, and a woman who desired motherhood simply as a means to wreak revenge upon her offspring's father—and all because of a couple's ignorance years before and a man's love of the unexplained.

Virginie and I were nearing the point where my way and hers and her children's ran apart.

"You said you would try to be a friend to me," she said. "All that I ask is that you say nothing of this to him. Will you promise? If you tell him, I shall know quickly enough."

"I promise."

I found myself in a difficult position. I was the confidant of both and I could not—at least openly—let either know that the other confided in me. I considered deserting Perdoz for another barber, but a growing interest in their troubles took me as often as ever to the little shop in Aliso street. Frequently I met Virginie there and hardly a visit passed that I did not see Perdoz embrace his children and whisper at once lovingly and longingly:

"Oh, when you grow up, my darlings!"

And, quite different from Virginie, who never spoke to me again of the subject and who, in public, at least, maintained the attitude of an adoring wife and a proud mother, Perdoz, with almost Borgiac emotion, told me more and more of his increasing anguished fear.

"I am afraid she knows," he would say. "When I am certain of it, I shall have my revenge—if the children are grown up!"

"What is she doing now?" I inquired.

"Nothing new," he cried. "It is the same old thing that frightens me. It is the license. It is still hanging over our bed. Never, since I first saw it there have I missed it from its place. It's there when I go to bed at night, it's there throughout the darkness—I can see it when I cannot sleep and the moonlight shines through the window—and it's there when I leave in the morning. My only relief is my work in the

shop and my only joy is the thought of my children. I am growing to hate her—to hate even her shadow! Yet I cannot say a word! But I shall yet have my revenge on her! Have you noticed how the babies are getting bigger and older?"

I commented encouragingly upon the size and age of the children, adding, by way of lagniappe, a few words about their beauty and brightness of mind.

Perdoz fairly beamed upon me as I lay at his mercy in the chair and when I had adjusted my collar and tie and was ready to leave, he insisted upon giving me a cigarette.

"It is so good to know you," he said, warmly, "you understand my little mystery so well."

I did not spoil the reputation he had given me with himself by telling him that, while I knew something of the foolish secrecy that was ruining his family life, I was far from understanding its attraction to him.

For a few weeks, Perdoz was so less unhappy than he had been that I was reminded of the joyful man he was when first I chanced into his shop. But his unhappiness quickly resumed the ascendant.

With the privilege of the old friend he thought me, I asked him the cause for the resumption of gloom.

"We are going to have another baby," he answered.

"Another baby!" I exclaimed.

He nodded, mournfully.

"You'll never get your revenge at this rate," I declared.

"Oh, I have been weak!" he cried. "But it is her fault! She insisted that it be so! How can I resist the woman I used to love? But this one shall be the last and I shall have my revenge when it grows up!"

"Perdoz," I said, "you are impossible."

He looked hurt.

"Don't misjudge me," he pleaded. "I know when I have had enough. From now on my desire for revenge on that woman and on that license will keep me strong against her temptations."

"I still think," I replied, "that the best thing you can do is to tell her all about it and get a new marriage license. And be sure you are properly married this time."

"Never!" he exclaimed. "Then I would no longer have a mystery. Besides, it would make neither of us happy now. No woman, especially one like Virginie, is satisfied with the honor a man does her by marrying her and letting her be the mother of his children. She wants him to love her, too. And after what she has done, I could never love her again. And marriage, bah!—it makes strange bedfellows!"

V

And so things went on for a year or two, Perdoz still making his almost daily complaints of Virginie until I became disgusted with him and wished heartily that he would either develop enough manliness to marry her or become wise enough to keep his own counsel, as she did, until he was able to exact the revenge of which he prattled so much.

"And still she never says anything about it," he would groan, "and still she keeps the license over the bed. She has the strength and persistency of the devil himself!"

I had thought, myself, of Virginie's apparent quietude in her realization of a position as unpleasant as possible for a woman, especially one who is a mother, and I wondered if she found a satisfying life purpose in bearing Perdoz' children through which to chain him to a mere license to marry.

A desire to see the climax of the revenge she was achieving and the revenge he was eternally planning kept me still a patron, although always a disgusted and often an impatient one, at his little shop.

I dropped in for my shave late one afternoon to find Perdoz playing with his eldest child. As I crawled into his barber's chair, the child, now able to talk quite volubly, started for the street door.

"Where are you going, my darling?" asked Perdoz, lovingly.

"Got to go home an' help muvver now," said the child.

"Oh, no, darling, you needn't go now. Don't be afraid of this nice gentleman. He won't hurt you. You needn't go home yet. Stay with papa."

"No, got to go home now," persisted the child.

"What have you got to go home now for?" insisted Perdoz.

"Got to go home an' help muvver hang up the license," said the child, calmly passing through the door.

Despairing anguish embedded itself in Perdoz' face. He almost fell into a chair.

"Oh, she knows. She knows!" he cried. "And she is teaching the children! Oh, my little babies!"

I was afraid to trust my face to him in his great agitation and I postponed my shave for a day.

The next afternoon he had calmed sufficiently to shave and to talk.

"I thought about it all last night," he said. "I see it all now. Some way she found out. So she hung up the license where I could see. But she did not want any one else to know, so she must have hung it up every evening and taken it down every morning. Think of it, every morning for years to take it down; every night for years to hang it up. The very devil is in her! But never a word has she said about it! Yet, she must know that I know! But some day I shall have my revenge—the joy of telling that I knew. Some day I shall have my revenge!"

"Why not now," I asked, rather brusquely "and have it all over?"

"Oh, I can't now," he answered. "Another baby is coming and—"

"*Another* baby!"

"Yes, another, and I shall love it so! But some day I shall have my revenge!"

NOCTURNE

By Louis Untermeyer

WHAT was there lay hidden
In your guarded mirth,
When the veils of purple moonlight
Screened the timid earth?

When impetuous April
Called its reticent bride,
What was in your laughter
That you could not hide? . . .

Now a bird's note rises,
Colorless and cool,
Like a spray of silver bubbles
From a snowy pool.

And you smile, a warmer
Mystery than the bird's,
Oh, reveal the music—
Never mind the words.

REPORT OF A SUNDAY EVENING TALK AT A SANATORIUM FOR FEMALE ALCOHOLICS

By a Traveling Lecturer Who, Owing to Some Confusion of Schedule, Thinks He Is Addressing a Women's Society of Tennyson Admirers on the Anniversary of the Death of the Poet.

By Christopher Morley

MY dear ladies:—

Among the potent spirits that we love to celebrate there was never any more ardent than the one you and I are so familiar with. The memory of that enkindling spirit is precious to us, its fragrance and stimulation come to us from the still—er, the stillness—and though the chalice is broken and the bar is crossed for the last time, we may yet console ourselves in the hope of a future glorious reunion beyond the swinging doors. [*Restlessness in the audience, and shrill squeaks of laughter from one or two excitable patients.*]

How long it seems—nay, how long it is!—since that fine spirit was among us. How long I might decant—er, descant—upon the effervescence of his youth, when dreaming by the bier of his dear friend, "too full for sound or foam," he cried:

O, father, wheresoe'er thou be,
Who pledgest now thy gallant son,
A shot, ere half thy draught be done,
Hath stilled the life that beat from thee.

If one should bring me this report,
That thou hadst touched the land today,
And I went down unto the quay
And found thee lying in the port—
The man we loved was there on deck,
But thrice as large as man he bent
To greet us. Up the side I went,
And fell in silence on his neck—

Let all my genial spirits advance
To meet and greet a whiter sun;
My drooping memory will not shun
The foaming grape of eastern France.

[Prolonged applause.]

I see how these noble and poignant lines thrill you with a thirst for what was once and now, alas, can never be again!

And then, mellowed and softened by the passing years, our patron spirit utters this convivial summons:

The Muse, the jolly Muse it is!
She answered to my call;
She changes with that mood or this
Is all-in-all to all;
She lit the spark within my throat,
To make my blood run quicker,
Used all her fiery will, and smote
Her life into the liquor!

[*One partially cured inebriatrix has to be removed by an attendant. Symptoms of deep agitation among others.*]

Ladies, I see with emotion how you are moved by these great words. Your president, in urging me to say when

[*Sensation*] I could be with you gave me no inkling that it would be my privilege to adress, so responsive an audience. I cannot urge you too strongly to cultivate your appetite for this kind of thing, for it is in these copious reservoirs that true joy is to be found. Fortify yourselves with deep draughts [*Signs of hysteria in the audience*] of this magnificent poesy, distilled by divine inspiration from the fiery cisterns—I beg your pardon, I mean sisters—of the Muse. It has been thought too often that Alfred Tennyson was but a soft and melodious minstrel quaffing an easy vintage of bourgeois success, and many beery wenches—your pardon, I mean weary benches—in public houses—er, public halls—have listened to that fallacious doctrine. It is true that he availed himself of the true poet's license to speak easy. [*Three patients swoon.*]

Ladies, your enthusiasm thrills me. Rarely have I known so cordial [*Commotion*] ahem—generally literary societies are too prone to malt and hock, er, to halt and mock— But to resume:

He poured out his spirits in generous and fiery fashion. On one occasion he treated Queen Victoria [*Uproar—several words lost by stenographer*] many of these show the highest proof of supernatural, I might almost say denatured, genius. His utterance is of course sometimes obscure: as we might say, to some of these poems there is no family entrance [*Prolonged uproar*]. For instance, the Lady of Shalott,

On either side the river lie
Long fields of barley and of rye—

or that extraordinary tavern poem "The Vision of Sin," where the poet addresses the wizened tapster—

Let me screw thee up a peg;
Let me loose thy tongue with wine;
Callest thou that thing a leg?

Which is thinnest, thine or mine?
[*Hysterical screams from the audience.*]

Ladies, your enthusiasm is most gratifying; it is really quite intoxicating. Just a word as to the poet's private life. He came from the landlord class; in person he was stout and never known to ail [*Cries of "Here's how!"*] He never knew what pain was, nor did he sham pain [*Yells*]. He was among the best sellers all his life, and in his youth he was always stewed [*Screams and ejaculations*]—always studious. His character might be called half and half—half convivial, half ascetic. As he himself put it,

And let there be no moaning at the bar
When I—

And as one of his loveliest verses exclaims—

Absinthe makes the heart grow fonder.

One of his favorite exclamations was the utterance of Omar, as translated by his friend FitzGerald:

O thou who didst with pitfall and with gin
Beset the path I was to wander in—

Queen Victoria thought so highly of his poems that she once summoned him to her private saloon [*Shrieks of "Prosit!"*] at Windsor to read some of them to her. He sauterne [*agitation*]—he so turned his verses that she appointed him poet laureate, remarking that his work was full of punch.

Of course, as you know, Tennyson predicted and foresaw the Great War. He says, "For I dipped into the future, far as human eye could see," in a very famous poem. Dipping into the future was a favorite pastime with him—almost a mania. A dipsomania, in fact. [*Several patients become delirious.*] That reminds me of an anecdote of my small son. The first time he picked up a volume of Tennyson he was much struck by the words on the title page: Alfred Tennyson, Bart. "Daddy," he asked me, "What does that Bart stand for—Bartender?" [*Irrepressible uproar. The audience is quite beyond control. Curtain.*]

UNMENTIONABLES

AN INQUIRY INTO THE ADVERTISING PAGES

By Owen Hatteras

I

ALTHOUGH I am profoundly moved by my bewildering discoveries, I shall endeavour to conduct the exposition and inquiry that follows in a dispassionate and scientific attitude, presenting the facts uncoloured and sure in my conviction that these facts themselves, however baldly laid bare, are sufficiently startling and disquieting.

The germ of this entire investigation lodged itself in my cerebral processes on the observation, some time since, of a suit of red flannel underwear drying on a line. Induced by the agency of a fitful wind, the flippancies into which the other garments on that line were led marked more evidently a lymphatic sturdiness in the red flannels. The significance of the latter was so obvious, so without sublety, that they were in their stolidity the symbols of a rugged truth. For them could be conceived no other use than the object of warmth, borne out so strikingly by their chromatic flare, and attained with an honest masculine directness of purpose.

The carmine pair were indeed so patently masculine that this recognition was followed immediately by an obviously antithetical thought on the entire absence of masculine directness, of straightforward honesty, in the inner investiture affected by the other sex. Possessed suddenly with a vision of thin ribbons, fragile laces, fantastic contours, sheer fabrics, unfamiliar nomenclatures and hooks and eyes, I was impressed with the truth that in this matter of the female undie reside significances deeper and more profound than have heretofore been attributed to them and infinitely more important than would be suggested by the stupid masculine jest that passes them over as mere vanities.

I will briefly say that this conviction of underlying meanings in lingerie, amounting to an *a priori* recognition, sat upon my faculties with the melancholy persistence of the bird upon the bust of Pallas. It has led me into strange fields, bizarre investigations, uneasy slumbers—and it has brought blushes to my cheeks. Bewilderments that clutter the intellect I now unfold to you, but those deeper truths, those underlying verities—I admit that most of these still elude me.

II

THE initial wonder that possesses the mind of the investigator when first he directs his inquiry among these inner mysteries arises from the puzzling variety in the objects of his scrutiny. Scientific classifications, essayed from various angles, fail like metaphysical attempts to explain the universe. Consider, for example, an effort to get some ordered foot-hold on these strange shores through the medium of etymology. One has a second of encouragement: two words are discovered with evidently a common root—camisole and chemise. Plainly, these are from the French *camisia* which in turn comes unaltered from the Latin *camisia*. Baldly, a shirt.

But how futile is this discovery The camisole and the chemise are not shirts in any decent sense of the term, and their etymological derivation is nothing more than a libel on the explanatory power of words. Indeed, what corresponds to a shirt in unobscured English, is, in this deluding feminine field, termed a *vest!* In such nomenclature one begins already dreadfully to sense a malign intent at deception.

But if the word chemise, which etymologically signifies a shirt, but in reality is no shirt at all, thrusts into the investigation an immediate factor of confusion, what, I ask you, is one to think of the term *shift,* synonymous with chemise? Nothing at all can be made out of that. It is bare and brazen deceit!

After the dubiously fruitful find of the two words under discussion, all anchors seem to be cast away and the flummery ship of undies sails madly into uncharted and fantastic seas. Etymology is now positively a delusion and a snare. What is one to make of *envelope* in connection with the garment it purports to represent? Latin, *involucrum,* meaning a "case." The word would be fatuous if it did not once more suggest purposeful guile.

But what of this astonishing fact: if one walks into the shops of vogue in the city of New York and requires an envelope, a certain garment will be vouchsafed. But if one enters Marshall Field's in the city of Chicago and pronounces the term envelope, a blank and unknowing stare will forthwith possess the countenance of the store-person. Yet, in this city of Chicago, should one say *teddy-bear* there will be passed over the counter an article identical to that purchased as an envelope in New York! Teddy-Bear! Why, I ask you, teddy-bear?

Or, again, brassier? From the French *brassière,* no doubt, but that term means no more than a bodice and what is a chemise but a bodice? Yet a brassier is no chemise, nor yet a bodice. It is a subtle, buttressed garment with a peculiar intent.

Or, once again, *umbrella?* I shall presently define and describe this singular article in considerable detail. The name is almost an insult, a slap in the face, to the good faith of words. Latin, *umbra,* shade. The perfidy of this malapropos application is manifest.

Nothing, then, is to be had of etymology. It offers no coherent classification and indeed no individual explications. To dally with it further is to build houses of sand that the sea destroys with each incoming wave.

III

CONFUSION is heaped upon confusion when investigation passes from the bewildering study of words to a consideration of the structural mien of these feminine subvestments.

In my early wrestlings with the subject, I endeavoured to achieve a classification after the manner of wearing, or, rather, the *locus* or *situs* of the garment. Thus, we would have divisions of the posterior and anterior, and loosely, of the caputal and pedal. But so persistently do these inner-sartorial phantasma blend into and overlap each other, in function and form, that the effort was foregone almost coincidentally with its conception.

Let us abandon science then, as a body that has given up the ghost. And let us, gentlemen, consider the things themselves.

Consider, indeed, a columnar garment, swollen at the top, cut off suddenly at both ends as if somehow accidentally truncated, and carrying on both its sinistral and dextral sides, affixed to the upper portion, two narrow loops, fastened, one end to the front and the other to the back division of the material. This is the camisole!

The lower extremity of this camisole is supplied with a tape or band, after the manner of a belt. Some varieties are furnished with buttons down the front and in these cases the means by which the garment is affixed to the body are fairly plain. In all cases the loops mentioned serve the purpose of

hangers, the arms being passed through them, after which they rest in a position over the clavical bone in juxtaposition with the omo-hyoideus muscle.

But, incredible as it may appear, there is common a variety of camisole unprovided with buttons and unbroken with any frontal division. I am unable to ascertain how this form of the dress may be placed upon the torso. Is it pulled upward from the feet? How then does its narrower end pass over the big places? Is it drawn downward over the head? Then again, how does its lower extremity pass the Appalachians? There seem to be serious and valid anatomical reasons why this form of camisole is impossible to take on and off—yet the feat is daily accomplished! Incredible!

Perhaps I have given the erroneous impression that the camisole is a simple garment. By no means! In the first place it is coloured in an astonishing variety of tints, so that a few dozen camisoles run the entire chromatic gamut. The function of these numerous pigments remains unknown. In addition, it is vastly complicated by slender and abstruse ribbons, inserted here and there, but frequently near the top, and extraneous laces of dubious purpose.

Allied to the camisole in general contour is the brassier. The configuration of this garment is much the same as that one with which we have been concerned but it is fortified somewhere or other with an armor of semi-flexible bone, extending upward like a singularly short cuirass.

The chemise appears to be a hybrid compound of the camisole, already considered, and a sort of skirt or kilt, similar to that affected by the Scots. This kilt has no set and determined length, but ordinarily extends at least as far as the articulation of the femur with the patella. The chemise proper, that is the chemise in its purest and unadulterated form, does not draw inward at the umbilicus, but continues downward in flared lines from the camisole-like capital extremity to the kilt-structure, where it terminates ordinarily in an astonishing fringe of perforated, lacy material, resembling in its porous texture the fancy papers they put in the tops of candy boxes.

IV

Differing in certain details, but of the general structure of the chemise, are derived several garments, the chief of which are the *combination* and the *umbrella*.

The combination retains with complete fidelity that camisole-like upper contour common to the chemise. But with a curious and unexpected vagary, it substitutes for the Scottish kilt a pair of exotic trousers which frequently effloresce at the bottom into the afterthought of an inexplicable ruffle.

Stranger yet, however, is the umbrella! This piece breaks the purity of line shown by the true chemise with a girdle or tape, passing around the lumbar vertebrae. This tape is drawn more or less close to the *fascia superficialis abdominis* and from it, downward, proceeds a process almost unreal. More specifically, the band or belt-like division, that terminates the true camisole formation, having now marked the narrow and middle portion of the garment, bulges suddenly like a singular balloon, until shortly above the *patella* it terminates abruptly, having achieved there a formidable outward flare. The general effect, when viewed from a brief distance, is that of a truncated cone with an extraordinarily huge base—a grandiose or sublimated skirt, in other words. Yet on examination one is astonished to discover that this seeming skirt is no skirt at all, but a pantaloon formation of incredible conception!

Compared with the umbrella, that vestment known as the envelope, or, alas! teddy-bear, is simple and innocuous. Again we observe the camisole upper, but consider the odd and novel manner with which the teddy-bear makes its conclusion. Situated centrally, over the mittel-europa, is a button. In the back, hanging downward when

unfastened, is a flap. This flap, unbelievable as it may appear, is drawn up and fastened over the front button just described! In this way, subtly and vicariously is re-established the trouser or pantaloon condition already familiar in the combination and umbrella!

One more point remains to be considered. Just which and how many of these garments might be worn coincidentally? The question is difficult of elucidation. It is scarcely conceivable that a teddy-bear and umbrella could be put on at the same time. Nor might, we imagine, a chemise and a combination. Nor would we be likely to discover at a single moment a brassier and a camisole. It is conceivable, however, that the envelope and brassier might be simultaneous. But who, I ask you, can say?

V

EXPLANATIONS are yet to be considered. Fatuously or not, the investigator is inclined to the notion that at the bottom of these phantasmagoria are psychologic and philosophic understandings.

In the case of the male red flannels with which we opened this thesis, the purpose of their being, as already pointed out, was manifest. They were made for warmth, designed to maintain the normal bodily heat of ninety-eight and eight-tenths degrees under conditions of cold and adverse climate. They possessed plainly formed arms, a torso, and legs. They were designed to conform to the general structure of the human anatomy.

Similarly, the B. V. D. As the red-flannel is a cold weather piece of the male, the B. V. D. is antipodally a warm weather piece. In its light and more or less diaphanous texture it promotes the circulation of cooling air-currents that tone the super-warmed skin. All is honest, direct, understandable.

But what are we to say of these fantastic undies that have for so great a space claimed our descriptive professorial attention? Warmth? Nonsense—they are made of tenuous linens, thin silks, and spongy laces. They are no warmer than so much air. Cool? Again nonsense! For only by simplicity of line is it possible to secure genuine refrigeration.

Perhaps, then, they have an æsthetic significance. But Schopenhauer asserts that for women the term *unæsthetic sex* should be employed, which if true would rule out any æsthetic reason for the feminine undie. And even if Schopenhauer is incorrect, as the old dear very possibly may be, there are no genuine æsthetics concerned in these curious garments.

The æsthetic depends upon a certain consciousness of exquisite form, of perfect configuration, of beautiful and supple rhythms. It is, at best, only an apprehension, that cannot be transferred to so many words. It is the sort of apprehension one experiences when, for instance, one listens to an adequate performance of Beethoven's C minor symphony.

Now no one, I believe, would claim perfection and exquisiteness of form for the feminine undie. At its mildest it is no more than droll, but at its worst it is terrifyingly fantastic as of the quality of nightmares. This, my friends, is not the æsthetic.

One of the additional arts in mancapture then? Hardly. In respectable company the undie is never openly displayed nor does it any more frequently furnish the topic of discourse. It is never alluded to and assumed not to exist. As a furthering factor in the capture of the male it would be a far too subtle weapon for application to the ordinary, unimaginative, masculine intellect.

Somehow, in contemplating these sartorial singularities, I cannot divorce my mind from what amounts, I suppose, to an intuitive sensation of *fear*. Their very inexplicableness gives a reasonable foundation to that feeling, like the awe experienced before the unknown wonder of the stars. But it is not exactly the misty fear of the unknowable.

No, this uneasy terror has much of its spring in a vague but none the less profound perception of malevolence, evil and sardonic intent in those illusory curves that so astonishingly mark the inner feminine vestiary. That feeling was shadowed out in the discussion etymological. I cannot explain it, but it persists.

It persists, particularly, because of that which I have recently witnessed. In glancing through the pages of some advertising matter I came upon the picture of a garment that spelled me first with astonishment and awakened me at last with horror.

I saw this: the representation of a woman, clad only in what might have been called a heavy union-suit. The material, wool I suppose, reached from the ankles to the throat. In just the first glance it had an encouraging significance, a smack of reform, for it seemed to serve the honest purpose of warmth.

Alas! Looking more closely at this thing I found that *nowhere was there a button or opening visible!* By no human means, therefore, was it possible to affix this garb to the body, or to remove it when it was once in place!

In that diabolic union-suit I saw a symbol of all the undie deviltry. I wish now to escape the thoughts of these terrors that haunt me like the ghosts of dooms. I wish the surcease of some desiderate phalanstery, some noble cenobium, wherein all would be male, and all, as a part of the creed, clad in righteous red flannels!

TREASURE TROVE

By William H. Bastedo

HIS tract of land was near to the coast, and according to tradition was in the Seventeenth century the stamping ground of buccaneer legions that skirted the American colonies in search of affluent Spaniard prey.

Reading by night of treasure-trove and sunken chests filled with lustrous, negotiable gold, Farmer Brown dreamed by day of the likelihood of someday, somehow unearthing a fortune on his acres.

One day, while plowing a turnip field, his plow struck a hard substance in the ground. Terrific excitement seized him. At last! At last!

It was a rock.

A MAN ceases to love his wife the minute she begins to grow fat. She has ceased to love him long before he has begun to grow bald.

THREE women in love with one man—anarchy. One man in love with three women—socialism.

DANGER

By Helen Spenser

WHEN they told her he was imprisoned in a burning building she did not turn pale and weep, because she knew he would escape.

When he said he was off to hunt wild beasts in African jungles she smiled and asked him to bring her a trophy.

When they said his boat had gone down she reminded them that he was a remarkable swimmer.

When a venomous snake coiled at his feet she laughed, because she knew he would kill it.

When he became ill she sang, because she knew he possessed unlimited vitality. . . .

When a beautiful woman came into the room, she trembled and her teeth bit into her lips until blood came and she dug her sharp finger-nails into her palms and she felt that she would shriek.

DEFEAT

By Harry Kemp

LET us shut in the dark a little while,
Let us shut out awhile the blaring day
That has come down upon us . . . you, you smile
A pitiless smile—there is no more to say.

I've fought and fought for you . . . and fought in vain—
Yes, all night long I've knocked at Pity's door
Begging you take a moment's thought again,
And asking that which you can give no more.

The other one—what has he that I lack?
No, I begin again! I must be still!—
And yet, if I could win one least kiss back,
I would forever serve your littlest will!

THE SWIMMING POOL

By Evelyn Campbell

LITTLE green ripples lapped the white and blue tiles like a baby's cool palms. The sun was going down, but in the middle of the pool a big golden square turned the water to bright emerald. Outside of this the shadows lay still and deep beneath the walls. Only a few people lingered to watch the bathers and at the end of the pool two or three bronze-limbed men lounged lazily upon the white settees.

Near the second rope a long, green-clad woman floated motionless, half submerged. Her rubber cap of bright red was dimmed by the sheen of the water and her dark face, half sheeted by translucent green, was cold as a cameo. Her deep-lashed eyes were closed and her breast beneath its wet sheath moved so faintly that she might have been dying there in the embrace of the calm water.

A billow leaped from the heart of the pool, a gleaming golden shoulder and then the length of a wet arm. A splash of spray struck across the still face of the floating woman.

But she was not disconcerted. With a slow, lazy movement she turned upon her side and shook the playful water from her face. A man's head lifted, wet and shining, smooth as a seal's, within a yard of her own. She noticed that his features were brown and clear cut and his teeth white and gleaming. And that when his eyes met hers they had that wild free glance that looks beyond other eyes.

"I didn't see you," he said unconcernedly. "You are the color of the water."

"It does not matter," she replied indifferently.

He put one hand on the rope and let himself lie long and straight beside her.

"See, they are all leaving," he said, looking to where dripping, shivering figures with mean, palsied limbs or overfed bodies were painfully climbing the slippery steps. "The sun has gone down. They are afraid of a chill. So it is the best hour of the day for a swim."

The woman laughed, a slight contemptuous sound, not mirthful.

"They are afraid of missing dinner," she explained. "You see, they belong to the class that never postpones."

She had magnificent shoulders and the narrow hips of an athlete. There were a few lines around her mouth and eyes, exaggerated by the cold austerity of the close cap. Behind her expression was a lurking mystery; she might have sunk suddenly beneath the water and, dissolving, become a part of it, so strange and enigmatic was the secret behind her eyes.

The man's body swung easily with the faint swell made by the plunge of other bathers. In the uniform garb they wore they might have been mistaken for two youths, so sexless was she in her charmless calm. They fell into a desultory conversation which imposed no obligation upon either and presently in the easy democracy of the place fell to swimming the length of the pool side by side.

Their long strokes were evenly matched and they kept as closely together as though walking. He glanced commendingly at her strong slender arms when now and then one flashed near his face.

"You swim well," he said, as though stating a fact without compliment. "You did not learn in a pool."

She smiled. "California. And you?"

"The coast of the world. I've been a sailor. . . . In Australia. . . ."

They finished the circle and back again at the ropes, paused tentatively before beginning the second round.

"How small it is," she complained. "See how some of them struggle to go from end to end . . . and how easy it is!"

"If it were the open sea. . . ."

"We could swim away where. . . ."

"Lifeguards and beginners are not. . . ."

She laughed, as faint a sound as the imitation waves against the tiles; then they began to swim, side by side as before. For a long time they continued so without speaking. They resembled languid caged squirrels upon an endless quest as they went round and round their doorless prison; or goldfish in a torturing glass bowl. They might have flung up their arms or raised their voices in human pleading, but instead they only swam senselessly around and around, their long, free limbs contracted to the confines of the narrow place.

Suddenly it was dusk. Not in the enclosure made brilliant by white bulbs, but up above in the oblong of dark blue sky where newly awakened stars began to show timid faces to their bolder rivals. They were in the deep water which lay densely beneath them. Again they turned upon their backs and floated. She put her hands behind her head and her slender green silk feet together. The water lapped and again threw a sheet of translucent green across her dark features.

He floated close beside her. Through half-veiled eyes, she saw his clear profile, brown and boyish, and the curves of his neck and shoulders, quiescent now in this scant moment of repose. The stars looked down upon their still faces. They were immeasurably removed from the splashing, screaming crowd which fought in the shallow water and grasped each other with shameless hands in the streaming glare of the white electric lights. The water rocked and swayed them as the distant tops of tall trees are rocked and swayed by remote winds.

"If it were the open sea, would you swim away—" he said.

"Beyond the horizon, where the sky and water meet," she murmured.

"You are in green like the waves. But your cap is red. It would be easy to follow you."

"You would never follow," she said after a pause. "My stroke would tire before yours. . . ."

"Then I would wait for you," he answered.

"I wonder what we would find over there?"

"I know a place where there is only the sky and sand."

A bell rang.

They obeyed the signal without demur, mechanically.

When they stood upon the floor, wet and sloppy from countless feet, they lingered a moment before going their separate ways. There was something they would have said, but so swiftly the spell faded they were left there in awkward silence.

He watched her go. She did not look back.

* * *

A fussy little man, ridiculous in a panama fit for Apollo, waited impatiently at the bath-house steps. He would look at his thin, open-faced watch, snap it back into his pocket and call fretfully to the active boy and girl who were everywhere at once in the annoyed crowd.

"There she is!" cried the freckled ten-year-old, whose lanky hair bobbed around her impertinent face. "Daddy, there is mother!"

A tall, tired woman hurried down the steps to meet them. She wore a fashionable white gown which was put on carelessly and was pushing the wet hair she had not taken time to dry, beneath her hat with impatient hands. It had a gray streak here and there as though

frost fingers had drawn themselves whimsically through its thick meshes. Her manner was agitated as that of one who, having surreptitiously laid down a burden, hastily assumes it once more.

At once the two children flung themselves upon her and the fussy little man began to flutter in the way of bantams.

The little girl complained shrilly:

"I looked everywhere in the pool for you, mother. I couldn't see you!"

"I am hungry," cried the boy, who was short and fat like the father. "We are to have dinner at the Inn. Come; hurry!"

The woman let her somber eyes wander slowly to the skyline. But where was it? On every side were people and merry-go-rounds. Dark masses which in daytime would be houses with ornamental shrubbery; a violet sky pierced and tortured by glittering towers and flaming lights before which the meek stars faded abashed.

With the cross little boy clinging to her side, she turned to follow the little man, already steaming ahead like a tug. But the roving girl came dashing back and seized her stolid brother.

"Look, look over there!" she cried, in her penetrating voice. "Do you see him?"

A man lounged against the wall, hesitating. He wore an ill-made check suit and a dark red tie. His figure beneath this disguise looked uncouth and too heavy. But his face was clear-cut and brown; his hair, wet and brushed flat, was smooth and dark as a seal.

"Where? Who?" questioned the boy stupidly.

"Over there. Looking at us. The new janitor. He came last week. . . . Ed!"

STRANGER

By David Morton

SEEING you rise, watching you cross the room,
I sense dim distances between us there,
Of planets plunging down the cosmic gloom,
Their trailing vapors clouding through your hair.
You are more strange than life, stranger than death,
Supremely individual and apart;
Some nameless nectar is your living breath,
Some unimagined blossom is your heart.

Above the world, touched with a vague surprise,
You pass, a stranger, in an alien place,
A brave bewilderment upon your eyes,
And dreams of dreams thick-crowding through your face—
Your glance meets mine, sweet in its puzzled will,
Smiling, half-piteous, and bewildered still.

CHILDREN

By William Drayham

CHILDREN who sing and recite before company.
Children who feed the goldfish to the cat.
Children who are learning to play the cornet.
Children who smile at you in a patronizing manner when you mention Santa Claus.
Sticky children who handle your silk hat.
Children who drop a banana peel in front of you just as you are about to smile at a beautiful woman.
Children who point a finger at you in a street-car and remark: "Ain't he a funny man, Mama?"
Children who make it possible for you to go to the circus.
Children who ask you to spell zygodactylous.
Well-behaved children you feel inclined to strangle.
Your own, thank God!

THE PROUD LADY

By John Kern

HER face is clear as summer skies,
Her lips are straw-berries,
She is more deadly with her eyes
Than any lady is.

She is more deadly with her eyes,
More sudden with her words,
And yet her heart is wistfuller
Than any little bird's.

Yet at her heart is wistfulness.—
And I have heard her sing
Songs that put sobbing in my heart
While I was listening.

THE DESIDERATE REPUTATION

By Mifflin Crane

I

"AND so, believe me or not," Dr. Allen finished his recitation, "these little blondes are the most amusing after all—isn't that so, Whalen?"

Allen turned jocularly to a bland, cherubic-faced little fellow on his left and throwing the comic query at him, whacked the small man's back humourously. The other club members in the circle laughed—at Whalen's expense. Some such drollery could be expected from Allen—for it was jocose to ask little Whalen's opinion about blondes or any other shade of women. His respectability was of such a long and well-known standing that it would have sufficed to throw a mantle of virtue over the moral deviations of all present.

A flush appeared on Whalen's round cheeks and he arose nervously.

"Whither bound?" asked someone.

"I guess I'd better be getting along," he said.

"I say, don't leave us yet!" came from Dr. Allen. "I didn't mean to embarrass you, old man!"

Whalen smiled feebly.

"Oh, you fellows are very silly!" he exclaimed. "And you don't think I'd go on account of a duffer like you, do you Allen? How do you know what I do?" (Whalen endeavoured to look sly and achieved a droll expression like an unsophisticated guinea-pig playing fox.) "What do you know about the way I spend my time? Maybe I don't *talk* so—"

Whatever else he said or had in mind to say was obliterated by a concerted outburst of laughter. Whalen saw that he had been mistaken to pretend to a deviltry that he obviously didn't practise. His confusion brought blushes again into his cheeks and he hurried across the room to where the hat boy stood holding his outer garments in readiness. And even the latter smirked suspiciously.

Whalen reached the street, whereupon a disconsolate droop settled upon his shoulders. He thought poorly of himself. He lacked assurance and initiative and he belonged to the wrong club. They weren't the sort of fellows for him—and yet, he liked them. A sigh like the sob of a small night-wind escaped him. Whalen was unhappy. . . .

He had nowhere to go and so he walked aimlessly, as one without a purpose will walk. He was not alive to the recognition of the streets through which he passed, nor was he thinking coherently of any thing in particular. He was given over simply to a melancholious mood and a sense of self-irritation. He did not look at anybody on the street, nor did anybody look at him, for he was not a man to arrest attention.

By a new and unpleasant dampness in the air that passed his face his proximity to the river was made known to him. He was approaching one of the upper and less used bridges that now in the night appeared without human occupancy. The stretch ahead was dim, misty, and desolate.

Whalen, observing how far he had come, hesitated a moment and then went on.

Whatever had been the obscure impulse of that act, the urge, or perhaps only inertia, that had led him to set foot on the bridge, he was a second later involved in an interest that removed his thoughts immediately from the indefinite figures of his melancholy. For he saw in front of him the mist-obscured figure of a girl, standing with her hands gripped on the railing of the bridge, and her eyes turned out to the river, as if she were waiting and expectant of something from the darkness.

She came into little Whalen's sight suddenly. She must have been there before, for some minutes indeed, but in her pronounced immobility he had not seen her. It was this sudden apprehension of her being that caused Whalen to start and stop, as if she had been of the quality of apparitions.

The girl neither heard nor saw him, but retained her pose that so suggested a tense watching. Her presence there was obviously not that of the aimless who stand in such places and dumbly stare into the water. It was this consciousness of some purpose she must have that stayed Whalen and kept him motionless, looking at her.

Perhaps two or three minutes would have summed up the time during which he observed her but made no movement. Then with a start and a curious thrill of terror, he broke into a rapid walk in her direction. She had not stirred, her immobility was as perfect as the heavy mists that hung over the river—yet Whalen, by some curious clairvoyance had suddenly sensed her intent, and the figure of her body, standing tensely, signified only a single purpose to him.

She turned swiftly as he drew to her side, but not soon enough to prevent his outstretched hand from touching her shoulder.

"What do you want?" she asked him in a low, unpleasant voice.

"You—you mustn't," he said feebly.

"What?"

"You were intending—you intended to—"

Whalen stopped; he couldn't get his perception into words.

She moved her head a moment and looked down into the fog under which lay the water, turning it back to him again, this time slowly.

"Suppose I did?" she asked. "It's none of your business! Who are you, anyway? What do you know about me?"

Whalen was silent and embarrassed and the girl, waiting a moment for some word from him, regarded him curiously, thrusting her face a little forward.

Whalen saw in her countenance now an expression of defiance that was somehow forced and unreal. The contour of that face was not unpretty, but it was a prettiness nearly spent. Her eyes gleamed lustrously, like those of one in a fever, an impression more marked by bright spots of expanding and contracting colour in her cheeks.

"Why—you're a respectable person!" she exclaimed. "What are you doing here, talking to me? I'm not respectable. You'd better run on before somebody that knows you catches sight of you here!"

"I'm not going!" mumbled little Whalen, doggedly.

"What?" she inquired harshly. "What are you going to do, then?"

"What are *you* going to do?" he asked.

"You better go on," she said.

"I'm not going," he repeated.

"Look here," she said. "If you're a new variety of those Salvation johnies, it's no use. I'm done—can't you see that?"

She glanced swiftly toward the river.

"If that don't get me, I'm done in a little while, anyway. Can't you see that?"

The significance of her words became apparent to Whalen as she fastened her eyes upon him. He understood the meaning of their febrile glitter. He stared at her a moment, astonished and shocked. He was utterly at a loss for anything to do; he had come out of his own world into one unknown to

him. It was with the unreasoning conviction that he must do *something* that he took her arm and pulled her with him a step or two along the bridge.

She resisted suddenly and stopped.

"Where are you taking me?" she asked.

"Come on," he said. "You can't stay here!"

"Where do you want me to go?"

"Come on!" he cried querulously, deeply concerned that her obstinacy might overcome him and that he would be forced at last to leave her there with her unspeakable intention.

She frowned and held back a moment more. But the little man who was tugging at her arm seemed ludicrously insistent and as ludicrously solemn. The girl laughed, harshly, horribly—and followed him.

Now that she was walking with him, Whalen was further bewildered. He tried to discover in his mind some purpose in his insistence, some aim that he had unaccountably forgotten. Meanwhile she moved at his side in silence, like an attendant ghost.

They had covered a square or more, when Whalen stopped abruptly and looked about him.

"We're not getting anywhere," he muttered.

The girl said nothing. She waited on his purpose. And on his part, he perceived then that there was only one place he could take her—to his rooms.

"We'll find a telephone along here somewhere," he said. "I'll get a taxi."

Once more she followed him, leaning on his arm. At the next corner they came to a drug store where Whalen turned in and telephoned. They then went outside and waited. A clerk in the store stepped to the window and stared out at them through the glass. In the time of waiting, neither of them spoke.

The cab drew up to the curb at last and before she stepped into it, the girl looked curiously at Whalen. He was frowning a little and his physiognomy suggested nothing save perturbation. She seemed to read none of the enigma that she found in him, and with a faint shrug of her shoulders, like a gesture of resignation, she dropped to the cushions of the taxi. Whalen directed the driver and they pulled away with a jerk.

Once during the ride she spoke to him, putting a question.

"What is it you intend doing with me?" she asked.

"I don't know," he answered her.

She stared at him a moment with surprise, and then turned away her head, dropping her face until it was hidden in shadow. She was too apathetic to search further.

But Whalen's answer had been true. He had no plan nor aim. He did not understand now why he had insisted on the girl's coming with him, nor what he should do with her. The moments were, after a fashion, not quite real. He was so taken up with his perplexity that they had been stopped a minute or two before he was aware of their arrival. The driver had climbed down and opened the door. . . .

Whalen stepped out and stood waiting to assist the girl. From the shadows of the cab she peered a second at the street before, stooping, she arose and extended her hand.

He led her up the steps and into the elevator. Ascending, the elevator boy looked at them curiously. The two got out and Whalen opened the door in the corridor that led to his apartment, standing aside that the girl might enter first.

As she had done in the cab, she hesitated, looking at him with an expression of surprise. Then she went in.

After Whalen had shut the door, she turned and faced him.

"What do you expect to do with me?" she asked.

Now, in the light, the spots of red on her cheeks glowed ominously like inner consuming fires.

"You'd better go to bed," said Whalen. "You're not well."

And, after a hesitation:

"Come—I'll show you to your room."

The girl followed him dumbly; Whalen touched a button and the chamber into which he led her was flooded with light.

"Is there anything I can get for you?" he asked her.

Her eyes were very wide, she looked upon his face. He stood nervously before her, waiting. Then, throwing back her head a little, she began to laugh. It was an hysterical, harsh and joyless sound that stopped with the suddenness with which it had begun.

"No! no!" she exclaimed.

Whalen drew back to the door.

"Good night, then," he said.

He waited a moment, but the girl made no answer, staring at him meanwhile like one who looks, unexpectedly, upon that which startles and is strange.

It did not seem that she intended to speak, and Whalen backed out, closing the door after him.

II

In the days that followed, the mental condition of little Whalen was like that of a man who has strayed into a strange land and become lost. He was, in other words, bewildered. He couldn't understand just how the girl who was in his house had got there, or, waiving the problem of her presence, what was to be done with her.

The morning after her arrival he discovered that she was too ill to arise. With her permission, he came into the room he had turned over to her and found her staring up at him from the pillow, an arm stretched out across the bed. He was startled to see that she had not undressed. And then he realized that she had no clothes save those in which he had found her.

He sent out his amazed man to make some purchases for her. In the meantime, he knew that she must have medical assistance. Rather mechanically, he called up Dr. Allen.

"Say, old man, I want you to come up," he said.

"What's the matter?" Allen asked. "You don't mean that you're sick, do you?"

"No, there's someone else here," Whalen told him.

Allen arrived later with a questioning expression on his face.

Leading him to the sick room, Whalen opened the door for him, thereafter tip-toeing through the hall to his study. He sat down, lighted a pipe and waited. His thoughts were confused and inconsecutive, after the manner of uneasy dreams.

Presently he heard a door close, and Allen's step coming through the corridor. Whalen did not turn.

Allen entered the room and looked down at him, seated in his chair and puffing nervously on his pipe.

Allen's brows were raised in satiric wrinkles.

"She won't last long," he said.

He maintained his ironic expression and continued to look at Whalen.

"Well!" he exclaimed finally. "Perhaps you have been putting something over on us, all along. You're a secretive fellow, Whalen. But it's decent of you to take her in, now that she's down on her luck!"

Whalen didn't understand and made no reply.

Dr. Allen regarded him a few moments more.

"I'll drop in again tomorrow unless you 'phone me in the meantime," he said.

Then Whalen got up and accompanied him to the door.

He came back into the room and stood by his chair a moment, hesitant and undetermined; but at last, putting his pipe on the table, he walked through the hall to the room occupied by the girl.

He knocked very softly on the door and waited.

"All right . . . " he heard.

He went in. She was lying much as he had seen her earlier in the day, save that now she had taken off the garments in which he had found her and the upper extremity of a night-dress could be seen above the covers.

Now that Whalen had come in he was at a loss for speech and quite un-

able to fathom the impulse that had brought him to her side.

"How are you?" he asked at last, lamely.

She looked up at him out of eyes that glowed like embers, blown up to a last bright flame before the final ash.

"I don't understand you," she said, slowly.

"Eh? I asked you—"

"No, not that. I don't understand why you have me here. Don't you know that won't do you any good?"

Whalen was troubled and embarrassed.

"Good?" he repeated after her.

"What do you want with me!" she cried suddenly, her eyes blazing feverishly.

"Nothing . . . nothing," disavowed Whalen, perplexed.

"Why did you bring me here? That won't help you any. Anybody can see what kind of a person I am. . . ."

Whalen turned away from her, unable to give her an answer. The situation had all the mystery for him that it held for her. He was lost in the singular consequences of his impulse of the night before. It had seemed imperative to him then that this girl should not be deserted, standing on the bridge. And he had acted, not upon any definite avowal of intention from her, but on what he had sensed she might do.

He walked out of the room puzzled, and during the remainder of the day the hours of his perplexity dragged slowly.

Every morning of the week that followed Allen called punctually and previous to his departure never failed to regard Whalen with a brow cut with satiric wrinkles. Once, indeed, he delivered him a brief clap on the back.

"You've been a secretive fellow!" he exclaimed.

III

It was the morning after this that Whalen's man came into him hurriedly.

"She wants to speak to you, sir," he said.

Whalen, who was not quite dressed, slipped into his coat and went to her door.

His first glimpse of her shocked him. Over night she seemed to have been somehow divested of all substance until now it was less a body than a startling pair of febrile eyes that occupied the bed.

For a moment she did not speak as he stood over her.

"When is that doctor fellow coming?" she whispered at last.

"In an hour or two," Whalen assured her.

"You must get him sooner!" she exclaimed, with an energy that displayed itself in the intensity of her enunciation, but not in the weakened whisper of her voice.

"Why—of course. . . ." began Whalen.

"It's not for me," she said, a tinge of self-scorn colouring her words like a sardonic vocal shadow.

And, after a pause:

"For you . . ." she added.

Whalen started.

"Me?"

The eyes regarded him with an unwavering and glowing scrutiny.

"Yes . . . he thinks something that isn't true. I want to tell him. You're a respectable person. . . ."

Whalen said nothing; he still looked down at her, meeting her gaze as if it spelled him.

"I don't understand you," she said. "I knew you were a respectable person when you took my arm that night. The doctor has no right to think anything different. Get him to come here now. I'll—tell him. . . ."

Whalen, as if a light had been turned into the processes of his brain, underwent a revelation. He understood all the satiric wrinkles with which Allen had been greeting him. He recognized the tales that Allen was spreading in the club and he perceived the sly reputation that he had acquired.

He turned from the girl swiftly and went out of the room. That, then, was the significance she had for him! And

now, under the impression that he would be injured, she wished to destroy all the inferences that her presence had created!

Little Whalen at last had something he could understand—not the tragic fate of the dying girl, for such flaring realities were not in his life, but a pleasant something she had brought him. Nevertheless, he was worried. She suffered under such a singular delusion! He tortured his inventive faculty—what inventive faculty he might have possessed—to design some means of persuading Allen, when he came, that he needn't go into the sick-room. Nothing presented itself and the doctor arrived while he was yet in his quandary.

Allen started through the hall as usual.

"You'd better not go there!" exclaimed Whalen, suddenly.

The doctor turned, astonished.

"What?" he questioned. "What do you mean?"

Whalen coloured a little and dropped into his chair.

"Nothing . . ." he said.

He experienced a sense of defeat, his pose became disconsolate. In a moment she would have explained and restored his old status.

But as he was thinking this, Allen had returned and was standing in the door, frowning.

"She's gone . . ." he said. "Probably so, for the past hour."

Whalen looked up, not with comprehension in the first instant, but understanding finally. A feeling of pity came to him for a moment—and then one of great relief. It was with this relief that he sighed. He experienced a warm feeling of gratitude to the unknown girl and a surety that he would always be indebted to her in his memory. Death had not given her the opportunity to talk to Allen.

Unknowingly, she had preserved his reputation.

WHAT THERE IS

By Morris Gilbert

THERE'S the silly wind and the proud sky
And the minutes on the run,
And the ribald sea that shouts a high
Unholy benison,

There's chuckling in the cynic trees
And gossip in the grass,
And glories, gleams, and promises
That do not come to pass.

SILENT, WHITE AND BEAUTIFUL

By Tod Robbins

I

TOMORROW at this time I shall be dead! I have repeated this phrase over and over since breakfast with the utmost calmness, with the utmost resignation. In no way have I attempted to blind myself to the truth. He who does that is lost. The philosopher alone is wise. Before the clear calm eyes of reason, the imaginary terrors of dissolution become infinitesimal specks of dust. I breathe upon them and they are gone.

And yet I cannot visualize my death. I have tried to many times, but have failed. Sitting down on the left hand corner of my cot, I attempt to picture the execution. My imagination has always been supernaturally acute. I can see the room and the chair—the chair dreaded by so many. And the witnesses? Yes, I can see them—all those sensation-mongers. There is one fat old gentleman in a striped flannel waistcoat—an old gentleman who keeps on smiling and smiling. One would think he were at a wedding, his smile is so forced and unreal. And the others are like statues, grouped together to represent something.

Yes, I can see them all. But they are not looking at me. No, they are looking at another man—a man who has seated himself in the chair. But this man is not I. No, though he sits in my place, wears the new suit which was given me, bears my dishonoured name, he is not I. And although I attempt to analyze this man's emotions, read the secret workings of that brain, understand the feelings of one in the shadow, the blade of imagination bends in my mind, becoming useless and dull.

Tomorrow at this time I shall be dead! This phrase no longer conjures up anything. Like a child who has repeated the Lord's Prayer over and over, so have I repeated, "Tomorrow at this time I shall be dead," till the words have become meaningless, sinking back into the hollow unexplored caverns of sound. And that this hand which guides the pencil—this live human hand—will in so short a space be motionless and powerless, cold and senseless, seems as impossible as the wildest dream. The voice of reason pounds dully against my ear-drums, but cannot gain admittance. Perhaps it is better so.

Am I afraid of death? No. Then why have I taken up the pencil? Because, although I am not afraid of death, I am afraid of something which lurks on the invisible frontier—something which is quite apart from both life and death—something which reads my words, my looks, my gestures. And because of this silent sentinel in my cell, I have become a stranger to myself—an uncouth awkward stranger. The egoist has fled, the artist who crushed conventionality beneath his heel; and in his place stands an unknown terrible fellow—a fellow who needs watching. I could have pleaded insanity at my trial and escaped the chair. It is so easy for me to act. But now— Why could not the judge and jury see me now?

But I must not peer too long into my soul. Introspection looks down the shaft, and soon sees the grinning face of Madness floating on the black water.

The austere countenance of the philosopher casts back a reflection which he recognizes with a shudder. The moon may be—. But I must not wander.

One source of solace has been with me constantly during my days of imprisonment. To a man such as I—a man condemned to death—the daily newspapers are of great value. It is a comforting thing to realize that there are thousands, nay millions, of human beings who are cognizant of my existence, perhaps intimately interested in the outcome of my career. During these last few weeks, as never before, I have felt myself to be an important link in the human chain—a link which daily holds the attention of a multitude of minds. I, the unknown sculptor, the young man of limited means and limited reputation, am now something of a celebrity. What an enduring hold has egotism! I caught myself smiling a self-satisfied smile when I wrote, "something of a celebrity." Avaunt, False Pride! You are in the presence of the shadow. Back, back to the highway of life, where the multitude sit in the sunlight. I have no need of you here.

I realize perfectly what a storm of curiosity my actions have aroused and it is not my purpose to leave this planet without a satisfying answer to the question which I myself have raised. You, who have so often studied my striking portrait in the papers, you, who have so puzzled over my whimsical acts during the ill-fated month of March, you, my friends and admirers, shall learn of everything which prompted me to a series of crimes destined to set the world of sensation agog. And you, my fair readers, you, whose soft cheeks so quickly change from rose to lily, you, who shudder and turn away, look again into the face which you have covertly abstracted from the newspaper—the face of René Galien, your humble servant; René Galien who created that group "The Happy Family." Respect is akin to fear, is it not? You shall respect me.

II

I COME of an old French family. There is the blood of kings in my veins. You smile, but it is a fact, I assure you. Have you not noted in my many portraits, the finely chiseled features, the aristocratic curl to the lips, the small shell-like ears? But my hands! They are what tell the story. The long tapering fingers, the delicacy of wrist and palm—yes, these are the hands of one refined by the gradual process of centuries. Why do my eyes hold your attention then, when I have such hands as these?

After the Revolution, my great grandfather migrated to America. Since then the Galiens have been bobbing up and down like corks. You know how it is—one year a mansion, servants, horses, dogs; another year a boarding house, genteel respectability, a single suit shiny at the elbows and knees. That comes from an excess of aristocratic blood in a plebeian age. The male members of my family have never been saving with their money. My father cried out on his death-bed:

"It is glorious to die in debt. One has succeeded in cheating one's enemy, the world."

A strange man was he, with a laugh like the cackling of a frightened hen, and dry shriveled hands which rustled in the empty pockets of his frock-coat like bank-notes.

My mother died before I can remember. At an early age I was sent to a school in Paris. Once a year I was allowed to cross the sea and visit my father in New York. He would meet me each time at the pier, looking very sombre in his high hat and frock-coat. I remember that towards the last his face seemed as yellow as the pale bloodless oranges one buys.

He resided at a small boarding-house in Thirty-Third Street—a French boarding-house where one encountered all manner of odd characters. Madame Fabien, the landlady, was a woman well on in middle life. At the time of which I speak, she attempted to maintain a

semblance of youth by a plentiful use of cosmetics. Her face, as haggard as a death's head, had a vivid splash of colour beneath each prominent cheek-bone; and above it, her hair, yellow and fuzzy, reminded me of sundried weeds. Her eyes were a bitter blue, but they softened when they looked upon my father.

In some way—perhaps by his glib tongue and polished manners—he had wormed himself into the landlady's good grace. The pitcher of cream always stood beside his place at the breakfast table; and, when he came to die, for many nights she went about the house mewing like a sick cat. No doubt with him was buried the last romance of her checkered career. Perhaps the realization of this added to the poignancy of her grief.

Madam Fabien had a daughter of about my own age who did much to make my visits to New York agreeable. She was a pretty vivacious child, with a mind far too precocious for her years. Looking through keyholes had given one of her eyelids an unconscious droop. She had made herself the bane of the boarders' existence. It is needless to say that what youthful innocence a French boarding-school had left me, vanished after a month's sojourn at Madame Fabien's.

After my father's death, I returned to Paris with a letter of introduction to an old friend of the landlady's—a certain Paul Montaigne. He was a successful sculptor of the period—a man, who, if he had not been addicted to drugs, might have reached high places. From the first I loved him. There was something restful in his companionship—something which reminded me of a calm autumn day. He gave me the key which opened the door to a new resplendent world. Art was his mistress. She soon became mine. Before long I, too, could see the beauty in ugliness, the joy in tears. If he had lived, what might I not have done?

Paul Montaigne adopted me. I posed for him; I swept up the studio; I enlivened him when he was plunged into one of those fits of melancholy which followed his excesses. In return for this, he taught me his art. I was an apt pupil. Soon I conceived several small pieces of my own, whcih I sold on the Paris streets. Once a week I took my stand on the Rue Montmartre and peddled my wares to any passer-by.

One afternoon I returned to the studio and found my benefactor dead. He was lying at the feet of a statue upon which he had been working—a statue representing Justice. His body seemed to be in an attitude of supplication. A thin ribbon of blood crawled towards the door like a miniature river of red. He had cut his throat. It seemed unbelievable at first. When I saw him lying thus, I felt that I had lost everything in the world. Dropping the bag which contained several tiny statues I had not sold, I sank to my knees and began to blubber like a baby. There the concierge found me an hour later, sobbing as though my heart would break.

After Paul Montaigne's death, I returned to America. It seemed to me that I could make my fortune there much more readily. Surely in the United States competition was not so great. My four years with the sculptor had given me a foundation few could boast of. Montaigne had often told me that I possessed a talent which was is no way inferior to his own. It was with high hopes that I set sail from France.

On arriving in New York, I took a cab to the familiar boarding-house. Madame Fabien opened the door for me. I scarcely recognized her. In the four years which had elapsed she had become an old hag and looked every day of sixty. After my father's death she had evidently buried her cosmetics. Her face, wrinkled and yellow, was so thin that the sharp protruding cheek-bones seemed at any moment about to penetrate the skin; her scanty hair was now a splotched grey; and she leaned heavily on her cane in the doorway, reminding me of the witches in Mac-

beth. But her eyes had not changed. No, they were that same bitter blue. Now they looked at me suspiciously from beneath a ragged boudoir cap.

"Well?" said she.

"Is this Madame Fabien?" I asked, suspecting that my memory had played me tricks.

"Yes, this is Madame Fabien. What is it you wish of me, young man?"

"I am René Galien," I answered, stepping forward. "Do you not remember me?"

"Mon Dieu!" The old woman's expression changed from suspicion to joy. She tapped me playfully on the shoulder with her cane. "Come in, come in! Of course it is René. Why, you are your father over again! The same carriage of the head, the same air distingué. Only the eyes are different. But come to these old arms. I have heard such things of you from Paul! *You* are the great sculptor now, is it not so?"

In spite of an inner qualm, I submitted myself to the old hag's embraces. She pinched my cheeks with fingers as yellow as sticks of cinnamon; she rose on tiptoe to press her lips to my forehead; she smoothed my silky hair with the palm of her hand—a palm which was as rough as a nutmeg grater. She was like the cracked dusty vase in which lies buried the trampled roseleaves of the preceding spring. Once a vessel of desire, she had been quaffed to the very dregs.

"Louise will be delighted to see you, René," she said, leering up at me. "Ah, you blush, eh! You remember her—the little cat that she was. But now! How she has changed! Like you, she has grown tall and beautiful. And such a figure! The art students draw her twice during the week. How the pencils shake in their hands, how their eyes stare and glare! They are like men in a trance—so beautiful is she!"

"Is she a model?" I asked.

"Yes; but there is none other like her in New York. When my last boarder left, it was necessary that she do something. We must live, is it not so? But I will tell her that you are here. She will be overjoyed."

Madame Fabien hobbled down the passageway, leaving me standing in a hot stuffy hall. As I watched her figure receding in the shadows, I made up my mind to remain in her good graces. I had been barely able to scrape up enough money in Paris to pay for my passage; and I was now in a wellnigh penniless condition. Of course I would soon be successful, but in the meantime I must not neglect any slight smile of fortune. Before the old woman returned with her daughter, I had made up my mind to be enthusiastic.

Louise did not make my rôle difficult to play. She had indeed matured into a kind of rare if sulky beauty. Her full lips, although pouting and discontented, were still inviting; and, although her figure was rather buxom according to my standard, still there were men who would have found it beautiful. My raised hands and upturned eyes therefore, while delighting both mother and daughter, even to myself had no savor of the ludicrous.

"Is she not changed?" asked Madame Fabien.

"Changed!" I cried. "*Ma Foi!* she is transfigured!"

Louise blushed and smiled. Evidently I had pleased her.

"You yourself have altered for the better," she said, looking at me quaintly. "You are no longer the ugly duckling."

I murmured a graceful acknowledgment, then turning to her mother, immediately reverted to the point in hand.

"Do you still take boarders?" I asked. "If so, I would consider myself fortunate in securing—"

"Most certainly you may board here," the old woman answered. "At present there is no one, and we can give you the better attention. My fees are moderate to the son of an old friend."

Again Louise smiled, disclosing two rows of large white teeth.

"Follow me," she said, picking up my valise in spite of my protests. "I will show you to your room."

Madame Fabien leered at me as I passed her. She again reached up and pinched my cheek. It nauseated me. Without the slightest compunction, I could have put my hands on her weed-like throat and choked the life out of her. Even then I felt that she and I could not live under the same roof without disastrous results. I hesitated for a moment on the landing before I followed Louise up the creaking staircase.

III

I MUST break off for the time. Father Flynn has been shown into my cell. Why does he insist on offering ghostly consolation to me? Can he not realize that I am a man of adamant will, of unshakable determination?

This priest in the sunshine dares to come to me in the shadow—dares to come to me and cry:

"See, there is everlasting life!" Everlasting life! Bah! Rather everlasting death—everlasting death with its calm immobility—everlasting death with its enigmatic smile. Yes, there I will be reigning like a mountain peak, cold, still, and thoughtful.

But now Father Flynn is approaching. His long black robe brushes over the floor of my cell with a swishing sound. His solemn eyes are fixed upon my face. About his neck a crucifix is suspended. Christ hangs there on this crucifix, tiny, weak, and helpless—Christ made into a doll. When he speaks of life everlasting, I shall point at his toy Christ and laugh.

IV

FATHER FLYNN has left me. His brain, heavy and ponderous as a mediæval battle-ax, was no match for the lightning thrusts of mine. I have hurt him in a sensitive spot beneath his armor of religion; I have penetrated his self-esteem. He now doubts himself, which is far worse than doubting God. Like an old woman who suddenly encounters a mouse in her bedroom, like an old woman with dragging skirts and downcast eyes, he has hurried from the cell. In his opinion, I am eternally damned—a man for whom the jaws of Hell are yawning. I have refused to reverence the doll dangling from his neck, therefore I am as one lost.

Poor old man! I pity him for his childish credulity, while I envy him his simple trust. But if I had had a Christ, if I had had a sacred symbol of something greater than myself, I would not hang it about my neck and be content. Ah no! I would build for it a pedestal; and on this pedestal I would place it so that it could sneer down on the passing people, sneer down on the passing people in the dust. And in its eyes would be hot anger; and in its hand, a reeking sword. Away with your tiny toy Christ, Father Flynn Mine would be gigantic and terrible—gigantic, terrible, and red!

But I must compose myself. Already Night stretches out her ebony wings over the world. When the first rays of dawn creep into my cell, they will come and take me away. Meanwhile Death is waiting in the corner, and will not go away. He, alone, does not fear me; He, alone, can return the look in my eyes. Before that grim sentinel my glance wavers and falls. I will take up the pencil and finish my record; yes, although the pitiless spectre continues to stare at me with his dull lack-lustre eyes.

V

WHEN I took up my residence with Madame Fabien, I intended remaining there only a short time. It seemed to me that my genius would find recognition before many weeks went by. In the meanwhile it was necessary for me to live—and where could I live on credit except at Madame Fabien's?

The old Frenchwoman ensconced me in a large room on the topmost floor—a room which had once served as an artist's studio. It had a north light; and was in every way suitable for a

work-shop. I had brought over with me from Paris the tools of my trade; and it was not long before I started working in dead earnest. Ere a month went by, I had created several little miniatures which I thought I could dispose of for a fair sum.

My moments of leisure were spent with Louise and her mother. I felt it necessary to keep in the good graces of both women. But what a bore it was! My flesh fairly crawled when Madame Fabien touched me. It was as much as I could do to submit to her caresses. And then the atmosphere of the house began to get on my nerves. It was so hot and stuffy downstairs, and a sweet sickening odour hovered about everything. In the parlor there were a multitude of photographs, representing Madame Fabien in her youth. She had evidently been a vaudeville performer of versatile repertoire. There were pictures of her walking a tightrope, a parasol above her head, smiling sentimentally at space; pictures of her in knickerbockers, riding an old-fashioned bicycle; pictures of her in tights, toe-dancing on a horse's back. And in all these photographs she resembled Louise. Yes, there was the same haggard face with high cheek-bones and petulant lips, the same full-bosomed broad-hipped figure, the same sensual drooping eyelids. Thirty years ago my landlady had been another Louise. And, when I realized this, what little affection I had for the girl faded. Although I continued to ply her assiduously with compliments, my words no longer had the slightest ring of truth.

And as the weeks went by, I came to realize that it would be difficult to escape my environment. Daily a web of attachment took shape. Both these women regarded me now with an air of ownership. To Madame Fabien, I was a living embodiment of one to whom she had given the last dying sparks of passion; to Louise I was a companion of childhood suddenly transformed into a fairy prince who had crossed the seas to win her.

And I? Why, struggle as I might to free myself, my feet were sinking in the quicksand. A month passed, and I had not sold a single piece of work. Where else could I go? I was penniless and in debt. Contrary to my expectations, my miniatures went begging. These imaginative figures which I had sold so easily in Paris—these weird gargoyles, nymphs and satyrs, were shuddered at, but never bought.

I found myself battering my head against an obstinate senseless wall of optimism. The beauty which lurks in ugliness, the transcending horror depicted in my work, the morbid terror which enwrapped those tiny figures—all was quite lost on the stupid smiling people who passed me by. They hurried on, these people; hurried on through the tunnel of life unheedingly, looking neither up nor down, quite immersed in their own bright dreams and unwilling to contemplate the stern austere countenance of Art. I might have gone on for centuries in my garret, striving, creating, and quite unnoticed, were it not for that group "The Happy Family."

At last my affairs reached a climax. I could no longer avoid Fate. I married Louise. Yes, loathing her with all my soul, seeing in her a future Madame Fabien, I married her. It came about like this:

One afternoon, while I was at work, a knock sounded on my door. It was Louise. The night before she had heard me express a wish for a female model. She had come to offer her services. Yes, she was quite willing to pose for me. It was no trouble at all. She would be ready in a moment now.

With brazenness, even for a professional model, she began to disrobe. I attempted to detain her. I put my hand on her arm, but she only kissed me and called me a foolish boy.

"Are we not already as good as married?" said she.

I did not realize how truly she spoke until I looked over her shoulder and saw Madame Fabien standing in the doorway. I was positive that something was about to happen. My land-

lady, among her other accomplishments, had at one time been a melodramatic tragedienne. On her face was mirrored the rôle which she was about to play.

"So!" she cried in a voice which squeaked like a violin out of tune. "So! I find you thus. Is this how you repay me, René? Has it not been enough to live here week after week, to take board and lodging from me gratis, to receive from my hands all the attention of a mother, without attacking the virtue of my daughter? No, don't attempt to explain away your guilt. Thank God my eyes can still be trusted! Louise, go to your room! I will talk to this young man alone."

Fifteen minutes later, all was over. I had agreed to marry Louise on the following day. That old virago had so battered me with words that my brain was reeling. I would have signed my death-warrant to have gotten rid of her. And she, when the victory had been won, when my promise had been gained, immediately relapsed into a sickly sentimental air. She pinched my cheek and lavished me with endearments; she called me her own beautiful boy; she bade Louise fetch a bottle of Madiera from the cellar, and pledged my health in the sweet wine till her eyes grew misty and her voice sounded dull and indistinct.

And I? Why, I bowed and smiled, and kept on bowing and smiling till I felt like a mechanical doll attached to a giant's finger. And the smile seemed to grow and grow till it covered my face with painful agitated wrinkles; and my head grew heavy and bulbous, so that it became difficult to raise and lower it in time to the old woman's eager, querulous questions.

At last they left me to myself.

VI

On the following day Louise and I were married. What a mockery As the words fell slowly from the priest's mouth—words which weighed me down as though they had been so many pellets of lead—I had a wild impulse to leap to my feet, to shake the girl's hand from my arm and dash out of that church never to return. My one cowardly trait, my dread of penury and hunger, forced me to remain. And as I knelt before the altar, looking up into the priest's wrinkled face, I became unpleasantly conscious of Madame Fabien's proximity. I felt her breath fanning the back of my neck. Involuntarily I shuddered and yet beads of perspiration dotted my forehead. At last the ceremony was over, and we returned home.

Home! What a blasphemous title to apply to such a place! And yet the roof sheltered my head, the walls shut out the darkness and the cold. Where else could I find as much, I asked myself. Think of the irony of it! I, a young man of talent, an individualist, an artist, and yet forced to acknowledge such a defeat. It was then I came to the realization that there was something wrong with the world. Surely it had been rolling downhill for ages—a wicked ball bent on destruction. In vain we Supermen seek to push it up, to place it on the heights—it evades our eager hands and descends into the black depths. To this day, I cannot contemplate its final degradation without a feeling of regret, even of horror.

It is not my purpose to dwell too long on my married life. Suffice it to say, that it soon became unendurable to me. Living with one woman constantly is prone to wear on the nerves of the sensitive man; but, when this woman is lacking in both mentality and feeling, artistic appreciation and higher aspirations, she becomes a burning coal of agony which one is forced to hold to one's bare breast. Before a week had passed, I hated Louise as I had never thought to hate any human being.

What made it worse, the girl positively adored me. She gave me no peace. She would break into my studio while I was at work, and shower me with loathsome caresses. I had no solitude of the soul so necessary to an artist. She sought to occupy every cranny of my life. If I reprimanded

her, if, driven to desperation, I struck her, waves of hysterics would follow—hysterics, that abomination of woman—and to avoid this shrieking inferno it was necessary for me to calm her with kisses and protestations of affection.

Then there was Madame Fabien—Madame Fabien with her fishy eyes! How her tongue clattered! I have often thought that she must have assassinated my father with it. And life was still strong in this bag of old bones! It shown evilly out of her bitter blue eyes; it spoke volubly through her dry, shriveled lips. She might live twenty years more—live and persecute me. This thought was unendurable.

One night inspiration touched me—the inspiration of "The Happy Family." True perception springs from contrast. It has always been my experience that in the city one can visualize the country with an acute clarity. So it is with all things. The musician composes a dirge on a bright spring day; the starving poet writes an ode to sparkling wine and luscious fruit. Thus it was in my case. From a confirmed unbeliever in marriage, I could now see the joys of wedlock. My own unfortunate affair had conjured up in my mind an ideal picture of wedded bliss—a happy family, united in thought and deed; a silent happy family who found mere speech unnecessary to a complete mental understanding.

And as I sat at dinner, listening to the shrill voices of the women, watching their distorted mouths and glistening eyes, in an instant it became apparent what made them so hideous, so revolting. It was life that marred them; hot, noisy life which twisted them into repellent shapes; life which made them detestable and unforgivable. As statues—deprived of breath, motion, speech—they would no longer cause me any pain. On the contrary, I might be proud of them. Madame Fabien could very well have been Rodin's "Courtesan," alive, clothed and speaking. Such ugliness was beautiful in art. It was only when it stepped down from its pedestal that it became loathsome and degraded. And Louise? If she would not speak in that whining tone, if her face could always remain calm and placid, if she could be placed in an artistic posture with her chin resting on her hand—why, she would be beautiful!

And then in my imagination I saw them as statues; saw them sitting there, silent, white and beautiful; saw them sitting on a pedestal, united and peaceful, cleansed of life's impurities, quietly waiting for the children yet unborn—I saw "The Happy Family"!

Why was it not possible to make them so? A few drops of poison in their coffee, and life would quickly fade away. And then! Why, then I would carry them up to my studio where I had so often worked before. But this time I would not work in vain. No, I would make statues of them—enclose them in a special preparation of clay which might last through all the centuries. Their bodies would not decompose in such a covering. It would be easy—easy! Perhaps I could sell them to an art dealer. At this thought, I laughed aloud.

"Why are you laughing, René?" asked Madame Fabien with one of her quick, suspicious looks.

"I was thinking of what an excellent statue you would make, mama. May I use you for a model?"

She shook her bony head at me like an old vulture.

"Careful, René, careful," she mumbled. "Don't bite the hand that feeds you. Youth should respect age."

"But I was in earnest, mama," I assured her.

"Bah!" She rose and hobbled off on her cane, leaving Louise to wash up the dinner things.

For the moment I was free.

Telling my wife that I had to post a letter, I put on my hat and left the house.

When I returned I had a small vial of poison in my waistcoat pocket.

As I lay beside Louise that night, I

dreamed peacefully of "The Happy Family."

VII

HAVE you ever considered what a childishly simple thing it is to take a human life? We are all so trusting with our fellows, so guileless and trusting, that, when the murderous hand reaches out to cut the cord of existence, we stand blinking our eyes stupidly, quite unable to realize the danger. If it were not for the bodies of his victims—bodies which, although silent, bear unfaltering testimony to the truth—the assassin might stalk unmolested through the world. Our immortality seems so assured to us, that we seldom question the eyes of those who may have it in their keeping.

Louise and her mother suspected nothing. On the following evening, when I suggested that I prepare their coffee in a manner new to them—a method which I had picked up in Paris—they assented readily. It was only when I placed the two steaming cups upon the table that any difficulty arose.

"I should not drink any coffee," said Madame Fabian, shaking her head sorrowfully.

I felt a sudden flicker of fear.

"Why not, mama?" I murmured, bending over her solicitously.

"It keeps me awake at night. I cannot sleep when I drink coffee."

I could not refrain from smiling.

"Never fear, mama," I answered reassuringly. "This coffee is so prepared that you will not be troubled by insomnia. I guarantee that you will sleep soundly tonight—very soundly."

And then, without hesitation, without fear, almost without taking breath, these two women drank their poisoned coffee. I watched them with a calm, impersonal curiosity. And yet the next few moments were the most embarrassing moments of my life. I felt that I was conversing with spectres. Everything I said rang out of tune. I attempted to joke, and my witticisms fell far below humour. I attempted to laugh, and my own familiar laugh sounded as hoarse and guttural as the cawing of a crow. And these two women seemed like stiff formal strangers who could not in any way be amused.

Madame Fabien was the first to go. One side of her shriveled face drew up into knots, as though a cord in her cheek had been suddenly pulled. She clapped her hand to her stomach.

"Oh!" she cried. "I suffer! I—I—. Get the doctor. Get the—"

She rolled to the floor, and lay there kicking and clawing like a wounded wildcat.

Louise rose and bent over her.

"René, run out and get Dr. Milburn," she called over her shoulder in an agitated voice.

I had no desire to see them die. A wanton taste for cruelty has never been one of my characteristics. I quitted the room, and, mounting the stairs to my studio, spent a few peaceful moments over a cigar. When I returned to the dining room, I found both women dead. Louise's body lay across her mother's. Her upturned face wore an expression of amazement. It was as though I had given her a sudden surprise.

Then the real work began. That night I toiled like a galley-slave. I carried the bodies up to my studio; I disrobed them; I burned the clothing piecemeal; and then I commenced my famous group, "The Happy Family."

With the firm, sure hand of an artist, I enclosed them in clinging garments of clay; I gave them immortal skins which might last through all eternity. And now that the life had gone out of them, these women were no longer repulsive to me. No, on the contrary, I felt a sensation of ennobling pride as I busied myself about them, placing them on the pedestal, making of them enduring works of art. When the sun finally peered in at me through the blind, two statues confronted me—two statues so lifelike, so virile, that the hand of Rodin himself could not have done better.

My work enraptured me. At last I had created something which might live. What a contrast was this!—Madame Fabien so thin and withered, cowering in the early light; and beside her, Louise, so strong and buxom, her chin resting in the hollow of her hand. This was art! For the first time in my life I loved them. I was so proud of them, that it was all I could do to refrain from running out into the street and bringing back with me the first passer-by to see what I had done. For the moment I was living on the sunlit heights of great achievement.

VIII

UNFORTUNATELY the artist is never satisfied with his first creation. He must go on and on, enlarging his original conception, until sometimes it winds itself about him like a many-membered octopus and sucks the life out of him.

So it was with me. For a week I busied myself in the studio, constructing a large permanent pedestal for my statues; but at the end of that time, I found myself longing to add to the group. What is a happy family without children, I asked myself. A mother-in-law and a wife were all very well; but surely, without tender human plants sprouting up about them, they were meaningless and thrown away. Yes, both were lonely and must have childish companionship. The longing look on Louise's face touched my heart.

It was shortly after this that I began to visit the park. With bags of candy in my pocket, I soon made friends with a multitude of children. Finally I selected two rosy-cheeked little dears—a boy and girl of four and five, who seemed worthy to join "The Happy Family." By promises of sweets beyond their wildest dreams, I enticed them to my house one afternoon. The rest was easy. Two sticks of peppermint, the vial—and that night, cleansed and beautiful, white and spotless, turned into tiny statues, they knelt at Louise's feet.

Another week of blissful contemplation went by; and then the loneliness on Louise's face again caused me an acute pain. Madame Fabien, of course, was perfectly content to sit silent in the sunlight with her grandchildren about her; but Louise was still young, still imbued with thoughts of love, still desirous of male companionship. She must have a husband. It was necessary that I procure her one. Then indeed "The Happy Family" would be complete.

One afternoon, as I sat pondering in studio, the door-bell rang. When I answered it, I found a tall good-looking young man on the stoop. Evidently fate was again playing into my hand. This young man would make an ideal husband for Louise. I could not refrain from smiling, as I stood aside and bade him enter.

"Is this Madame Fabien's house" he asked, stepping into the hallway.

"Yes."

"Is she at home? May I see her?"

"No, she has gone to the country for a month," I murmured. "She may be away even longer." I shrugged my shoulders.

"Well," said the young man, eyeing me suspiciously, "I have a warrant to search the house. I am a police officer. See this." He threw back his coat, disclosing a metal badge.

In spite of myself, my voice was a trifle unsteady when I spoke.

"But why do you wish to search the house?"

"For evidence," the young man answered. "Several children have been kidnapped lately. Two of them were seen entering this house."

He pushed past me and began mounting the stairs. I followed him. My heart was beating wildly; but my face, I feel convinced, was as expressionless as a bare wall. As he searched the different rooms on the second floor, it became quite clear to me that I was perfectly safe. How could he suspect my statues of concealing what he sought? Soon I would lead him to my studio and thus divert all suspicion from "The Happy Family." And after-

wards, when he had found nothing, I would offer him a cooling drink of my own concoction—a drink which would contain an everlasting sleeping potion. Already I could see him on the pedestal beside Louise—a silent, loving husband.

"If you are ready," I said to the young man, "I will show you my studio. I am a sculptor. You will find children in there, but they are only statues."

He ignored my pleasantry and merely nodded. He was a very brusque young man.

"Show me your studio," he said.

I conducted him to it in silence. Opening the door, I stood aside and motioned him to enter. My heart was now beating calmly and evenly. No fear lurked in my soul. I would show this young man my statues, and perhaps he would appreciate what art could do. I was introducing him to his future family. Soon he would be sitting there, white, motionless, and smiling.

He looked about the room carelessly, and finally his eyes became fixed on the statues.

"They'e good," he muttered, "—damnably good!"

And then turning to me with a new respect, he said:

"I had an ambition to become a sculptor myself. I studied at the school, but couldn't make a go of it. I know enough about the game though, to realize how good these are. Rodin himself wouldn't be ashamed of that old woman." He pointed to Madame Fabien. "What do you call this group?"

"'The Happy Family,'" I answered.

"'The Happy Family'?" he repeated thoughtfully. "They don't look very happy—any of them. They look as if they had just been surprised by something—unpleasantly surprised. Take that old woman, for instance. She looks—"

Nonsense!" I broke in angrily. "They are happy—happy!" This young man's stupidity began to aggravate me. "In life they would have been loathsome and repulsive. But here? Look at this old woman!"

I approached and put my hand proudly on her shriveled shoulder. "She is a masterpiece. She—"

"Look out!" cried the detective suddenly. "Look out! She's falling!"

I uttered a cry of horror and clutched at Madame Fabien. But it was too late! Unconsciously I had leaned my full weight for an instant on her shoulder; and now, swaying once or twice, she was falling forward. In vain I sought to clasp her in my arms, to shield her body with mine, she bore me over backwards and we both came toppling to the floor. The plaster, covering her face, was broken into a thousand bits. Then the head of Madame Fabien—the head with its ghastly grin and glassy eyes—like some evil Jack-in-the-box, popped out into the sunlight.

I remember nothing more. The room, the detective, the statues, were swallowed up in blackness. I fainted. When I regained consciousness, it was to find myself jolting through the streets on my way to prison.

IX

It is morning. Already the grey light of dawn is sifting through the window. My task is over. I have told you faithfully the story of "The Happy Family." And now that the tale is told, now that the time grows short, I want to impress upon you, the reading public, you who have become so interested in my fate, that I, René Galien, am not afraid of death.

Tomorrow they may lie about me in the papers; they may say I had to be carried to the chair, that I wept, that I pleaded, that I even prayed. But you, my admirers, my friends, my brothers, shall not believe them. No, I only fear something which lurks on the invisible frontier; something which is approaching steadily and relentlessly. What is this something? I do not know. But it is not death. . . . No, it is not death.

ELEGY

By Charles S. Zerner

I HAD read of beings like her. I recalled the ancient classics, and their beautiful gods and goddesses. She was a goddess. She was a lily dipped in wine. Her presence was a breath of rare perfume. My heart fluttered, and I was lulled into dreamy slumbers of joy. I sailed in luxurious languor on a filmy cloud and by my side lay my goddess of dreams.

Even as I dreamed she approached me, and sweetly, like the tinkle of sleigh bells on a moonlit wintry night, she whispered, "Can you tell me the price of those hot water bags you have in the window?"

PAX POTIOR BELLO

By W. L. Thomas

I

VENI; vidi; vici!

II

I came back.
I saw her with a tall, gothic, sinewy, sturdy man.
I departed noiselessly.

EVERY time a married woman is introduced to a man she wonders if he is to be the co-respondent in her divorce suit.

THE ADVENTURE OF THE BALD-HEADED MAN

By E. B. Dewing

I

THE bald-headed man was a bachelor and free. He wasn't young. As for his being a bachelor, the marriage laws didn't suit him, and, having neither the power nor the inclination to change them, he avoided the shoals on which so many of his kind are wrecked. He avoided, too, the sirens who comb their golden hair upon the rocks. I suppose that in all this he was partly selfish. It wasn't worth the trouble and he had a tendency to be a little close about money.

Without being a financial genius, he had always managed to wrest from a stony world a sufficient competence for comfort, and if he hadn't been a little close he might not have been able to do so. I realize that the matter of comfort is one of comparison. He didn't have enough money to own an automobile, for instance—not of the sort and in the manner he would have thought necessary—but he had enough to keep his end up in a careful way with a good many people who did own them. Not being of a personality sufficiently fascinating to pay for itself, he could yet do his share in the semi-social world in which he usually found himself after five on week-day afternoons and on Saturdays and Sundays and Fourth of Julys.

He had a very pleasant room—and bath—in one of the largest, pleasantest clubs off Vanderbilt Avenue. He had a mother and an unmarried sister who lived in his boyhood home, which was a small city in the northern end of the state. He always visited them at Christmas and Thanksgiving and wrote them conscientiously and regularly throughout the year. He sent them quite handsome presents, consisting of various articles of feminine adornment highly vouched for by the knowledgeable young women in the shops where such things are sold.

I give this background in such detail only to show how foreign to the nature of the bald-headed man adventure really was. He was considered by his friends—he even considered himself—the acme of the commonplace. He was kindly, in an easy sort of way, and quiet and dependable. In the days when his hair had been as thick on the top of his head as it still was at the back, he had had the usual boyish dreams of Indians and gun-play and rescuing beautiful ladies from dangers untold. But he had recovered from that kind of thing rather early.

He was, as I have said, quiet and dependable. He never was late for an engagement. He never was inconveniently early. He could be jolly without being disorderly and gossip agreeably without saying anything which he might afterwards regret. No matter how late the hour, nor how early, he was always on hand with a clean, unwilted collar and a smile, ready to divert the elderly or the couple from out of town—for the most part, of course, the couple from out of town were well able to divert themselves—but I've said it like that in order to show how he had a special facility for putting the awkward and unpopular at their ease. It

was counted one of his virtues—virtues which, it will be seen, were not in the least exceptional. He never lost his head. He never forgot himself.

With his business life this story does not deal, but he enjoyed in business very much the same reputation he carried through his hours of pleasure. In fact, for many of these last he depended upon the society of his business associates. He knew their friends, their friends' friends, their wives and daughters. He knew, also, some of the less occupied of his fellow club members and sometimes he knew people—women, for instance—that the wives and daughters mentioned above wouldn't have cared to know. By his very presence he could lend a certain stability to some of the wilder efforts at entertainment attempted in his circle. One of these last was the occasion of his adventure. His luck was with him.

II

I SUPPOSE everyone has heard of Matilda Jones. That isn't her real name—it isn't even the name she chose for herself—but it's enough like it to make it clear whom I mean. It's almost as ordinary as the one she picked out—almost as distinguished among the Lucilles and the Mignonettes and the Aimées. It suggests in the same way baked beans and starched aprons and spring housecleanings. It prepares you for all this, making the real—or the false—Matilda a contrast so much the greater. Matilda Jones—we'll call it that—and then a flutter like the flutter of snowflakes in a wind, a wisp of a body wound in less than a wisp of butterfly hue, a small face, crescented like the young moon, with a wide mouth and smiling teeth and eyes whose loaded lashes hardly shadowed the brilliance which was like twin fire opals. Matilda Jones, and the orchestra blaring to her shining, beating feet.

She didn't know very many of the people known by the bald-headed man. She was too successful and too beleaguered. The friends she chose out of her vast opportunities were surprisingly smart and rich, and gay with a concentration of gaiety which put to shame even the wilder efforts of that faint circle in which the bald-headed man had his being. She didn't know his friends and she didn't know him. He knew her—with footlights between—but the chance of ever eliminating the barrier of footlights was so slight it had never occurred to him.

And then a powerful man, an important man in Matilda Jones' scheme of life, for some reason of his own requested her to accept the invitation of a lesser light to spend a Sunday evening by the sea, and this lesser light was a member of the bald-headed man's club, and, happening to see him, asked him to come along. He also asked another girl who, in his abysmal ignorance, he thought would be congenial. Five, the party made, including the masculine power on high, and they started off in a very big, fast automobile on a lovely midsummer's afternoon under a cloudless sky. They were going to a pleasantly distant shore to eat clams and corn on the ear and drink champagne and listen to the Hawaiian players—it was in the days of Hawaiian players, the days before the war—and while it was a group oddly gathered, it nevertheless gave promise of an ultimate blending.

Now, it need hardly be explained that the bald-headed man was not invited in order that he should monopolize the guest of honor—explained to him less than to anyone else. That he did so—and here his natural modesty might protest—wasn't altogether his fault. Perhaps Matilda Jones resented the presence of the other girl—she was very particular about the people with whom she associated, especially the women, she couldn't afford not to be—perhaps she had some other motive, less explainable. But whatever the cause, the result was that she absolutely ignored the man who had invited her, also the man at whose request she had accepted the invitation, and devoted herself exclusively to the one who re-

mained. He might have discouraged her overtures, but that would have been more than human, and our friend made no pretence of being above the ordinary level.

He didn't refuse the place she made for him by her side—she distributed her indulgences in a manner which in anyone less secure of their reception would have been arrogant — and he turned an unseeing eye to the obvious claims of the men she had neglected. To the other girl fell the task of pacifying these, and to her belongs the credit of at least a superficial success. Soon their conversation was hilarious enough to drown completely the very quiet and polite interchange in which—much to his surprise in the present company—the bald-headed man found himself taking part. But he had always prided himself upon his small talk and was easily qualified to play up to Miss Jones, whose social advantages—though great—were of a date comparatively recent.

Gradually there crept into their talk a more intimate tone. As the afternoon wore on to evening, as the breeze heightened and the tang of the salt replaced the mingled town scents they had left, he toyed with the illusion that he and his companion were alone together—the whole world empty save for them. The other people, with their noisy laughter, were no more than the waves breaking against some desert shore. He hadn't felt as he felt now, at once so alert and so content, since he didn't know when. He didn't know, of course, that the ground of his adventure was being prepared, the seed sown.

I have described our party as having for a final object the consumption of clams and roasted corn and champagne. Not this last for Matilda Jones —she rarely drank. She didn't have to in order to be gay and she valued her figure and what could be discerned of her complexion. The other girl, however, and the two ill-treated men had no such hesitations. But out of compliment to Miss Jones the bald-headed man followed her suit. Besides, he had no wish that alcohol should dull the fine edge of his enjoyment. He was well enough off as he was.

As he had helped Matilda Jones out of the car, and she had for the first time fairly met his eyes, his heart had missed one beat. Which was the first occurrence of such an omission in more years than he cared to think about. It was a disturbance as sudden and as unexpected as though someone had stabbed him with a knife. But stabbing would have been a disagreeable happening, while the phenomenon I record was of the pleasantest sort.

Their common abstemiousness in the midst of revelry gave the pair a still further isolation. The key of their surroundings was pitched high and they made no attempt to reach it. They were stranded together, and a companionship begun at random continued as though compelled by fate. The evening was still young, I remember, and they had traversed a surprising mental distance—greater, by far, than they might have had any right to expect—remarkably great when you consider that the bald-headed man was ever alive to Miss Jones' shortcomings.

They were alone together—very much alone—and then there came a time when this figurative loneliness was not enough. The bald-headed man felt himself suddenly brushed by crowds and he steered his companion past various wandering couples till he finally outdistanced them all and came out at the far end of the hotel piazza. He had in his mind but the haziest notion as to what use he intended to make of their privacy. It wasn't in order that he might be free to make love to her, which he so far distinctly hadn't done; it was more that he might get away from the music of the Hawaiian band, get away from all the racket which suddenly bored him, and have a precious, undisturbed hour with the exquisite creature who had so taken him off his feet. Her shortcomings were after all

unimportant in comparison with her rarity.

The part of the piazza where they finally took refuge was built right out over the waves, which made a kind of soft thunder beneath their feet. It fronted a wing of the building which, pending some planned for alterations, was not in present use, the parlors behind them were unlighted and empty, chairs were piled along the wall, two by two. Miss Jones' cavalier disentangled a pair of these, but she preferred to stand. They stood with their backs to the piazza rail, leaning against it slightly, and he took from his cigar case a most excellent cigar. He produced also some cigarettes and held a light for them both in the shelter of his hat.

"Ah," he said, inhaling deeply his first draft of smoke, "this is the life!"

She smoked for a moment in silence. "You take it quietly—that's what I like about you."

He smiled his agreeable smile. "My dear little girl—what you like about me. . . . Why you should like anything—that's what I can't make out—why you should bother with me for one minute—I can't begin to tell you how deeply I appreciate it!"

"Won't you try?" asked Matilda Jones.

The bald-headed man hadn't made love to her—not in any ordinary sense—and he didn't intend to do so. He realized a little just how tired she must be of all that sort of thing—how the ordinary terms and acts of endearment must have gone stale for her long ago. He had no wish to add to the burden of them. She was appealing as well as provocative. She could easily, he felt, bring out the best in a man as well as the worst, and he would have liked really to do something for her—something more than take advantage of her kindness. He rarely did take advantage of the kindness of women — he found it wiser not to — but he yet more rarely possessed so strongly the desire to be of service. There had been that one odd skip of the heart and now a flirtation, articulated largely from an ingrained habit of similar articulations, but the mental state of the bald-headed man was far in advance of anything which had taken place between them.

It must be remembered he had seen her dance—a wisp—the hues of the rainbow—he kept thinking of her like that, and here she was. She reminded him of an image of fine china, so brittle it might be crushed together — friable was the word which came to him—all in white, she was—the simplest, freshest dress, the smallest, smartest hat. There was little to suggest the artificiality of the footlights except her painted face. The bald-headed man had noted that earlier in the day, and how it was painted with an elaboration and an art foreign to the conventional powder and rouge. But what she did with her face was her own affair and in the semi-darkness of the balcony the paint didn't show.

She bent far back over the balcony railing and blew her smoke to the studded sky. She was unbelievably supple. She bent back until one would have thought the sharp rail edge would have cut into her flesh.

"Look out—you'll fall!"

"Oh, no, I shan't." She was like a white ribbon curving over the darkness of the sea.

"I'm not a swimmer," her escort admonished.

"I am," she reassured him. "I used to do a diving act before I found I liked dancing better."

"Well, you're not doing a diving act now." He helped her to safety. "You ought to be more careful. The tide is rising. I wonder what ever possessed them to build this place so far out."

"I suppose they built it first and then the water came."

"Built it between tides? Well, I shouldn't care to go floundering about, it's too black and too cold."

Matilda Jones laughed. "I'm afraid you're not a hero."

"I never have been. But I'll do my best if you say the word. Are heroes

the only sort of men you'll look at twice?"

The water, seething beneath them, was beginning to try the bald-headed man's nerves. He had turned from the rail and was pacing the cramped space between that and the chairs piled against the wall. Some of the best of his intentions in regard to Matilda Jones were weakening. "You didn't answer my question," he insisted.

"Oh," she said, "if I only looked at heroes—"

Someone was calling them.

III

It has been said that being drunk is a tremendous test of being a gentleman. That is to say, a gentleman is a gentleman always, and a man who isn't can bluff it out only when strictly sober. The powerful man, the man important in Matilda Jones' scheme of life—he at whose request she had accepted the invitation of the lesser light—couldn't stand the test. Yet there were breaches he hadn't committed. He must have been extremely jealous of her and the baldheaded man — perhaps in that he was within his rights—but he hadn't caused a scene about it in public. He made up now for any omissions of the past. He considered they had been together long enough and he had come to get her.

The object of his quest watched his progress towards her. The liquor had gone to his feet as well as his head, he stumbled a little as he threaded his way and he sometimes caught at the balcony rail almost as if he were on the rolling deck of a ship instead of the secure piazza of an inn. He was quite close before he ceased calling.

"Why didn't you answer?" Drinking hadn't affected his voice so much with thickness as with harshness.

The young woman he addressed didn't reply to him direct. "You ought to have a whistle and then when you wanted me you could blow it."

"A kind of a dog whistle?"

"You can call it that—"

While these courtesies were passing the bald-headed man had the singular sense of it's not being in any way his controversy, but a matter between Matilda Jones and her other admirer, who ignored him as completely as he ignored himself.

"Well, come on—we're ready to leave—"

"You may be ready—I'm not at all sure that I am."

"I suppose you expect us to wait for you, while you and your friend here"—the inclusion was made for the first time—"you and your friend admire the scenery!"

It was still Miss Jones who continued to defend the situation. "I should expect you to wait—considering it was at your request I came—"

He who had come for her muttered an imprecation — "Damned impertinence," it sounded like—and then, "At my request, perhaps you'll say, that you're being so exclusive!"

He was insolent—head and shoulders he towered above the girl—his very towering threatened her—and the bald-headed man was forced in spite of himself to take a stand.

It was borne in on him how a moment ago he had wanted to help Matilda Jones and now he wasn't even defending her from persecution.

He threw his cigar into the sea. "Don't you think you've gone far enough?"

"Far enough for what?" The drunken man succeeded with a very fair imitation of his manner, he was notedly polite, and then with a burst of truculence, "What are you going to do about it if I have?"

"I shall take Miss Jones away—take her to her home, if she will permit me, where she won't be subjected to your molestation."

The drunken man met this—I feel I haven't begun to convey how drunk he really was:

'Take her home—oh, my God! Take her away—the little . . . the dirty little . . . !"

He used a word—he used it twice—which he never would have used in con-

nection with Matilda if he had been sober. It was a word which in its proper place has its quite respected sense, but he used it with an inference beyond the pale, the meaning it is generally preferred to consider unmeant.

The bald-headed man was not a hero. He was neither a hero nor a fighter. He had kept out of the affray rather longer than his manhood permitted. But now that he was in, he stayed. "What was that—?"

The enemy repeated the gibe.

Again there occurred the curious sudden phenomenon. The heart of the bald-headed man missed one beat. It seemed to leap and stop. The normal engine which usually pumped the blood for him so satisfactorily seemed to slip. If he himself had owned an automobile he might have been able to translate the thing in terms of machinery. As it was, he merely was aware of something which had come to him, down to him from heaven—up from hell, if you prefer—and turned him into a man who was as great a stranger to his normal self as though he had been forced to accept the entity of the first one who passed him on the street. It may have been his heart, it may have been his nerves, but whatever it was he was jolted—physically jolted—from his ordinary pace.

He took the flat of his hand—the palm—and didn't strike so much as he heavily pushed the drunken man away from him. It was a gesture of removal more than it was of punishment. As such it was eminently successful. The man was leaning with his back to the same rail against which the dancer had displayed her skill His balance, already in doubt, was easily dislodged, the rail was low for his support. He was forced back under his adversary's pressing hand, and before anyone realized what it was that was happening he had gone over into the water. He tried to shout, but a wave filled his mouth, he sank and rose again and could be seen struggling on his back like a great funereal crab.

The first thing the bald-headed man did was to swear. He swore softly and variously, he swore at himself for having done what he hadn't quite intended doing, he swore as it came to him that he should have to attempt the rescue of him for whose plight he was responsible. He didn't like it, but what he liked didn't matter. What mattered was Matilda Jones, who was gripping his wrists with a strength she in no way gave warning of possessing. China he had thought she was—an image delicate and fine. There was very little of the image about her now. He worked to break her hold. "Let me go—"

She had held him long enough, and diverted his attention from the waves which lapped and boomed beneath them, so that when he could peer down again into the darkness of the water what he had seen there before was gone. A little way out he could very dimly discern an object which bobbed and disappeared and bobbed again. It might have been the drowning figure of a man and it might have been something else. Whatever it was, it was very rapidly being carried out to sea.

"It's too late now," said Matilda Jones.

There was in her voice the quiet of a great relief.

Her champion sat down on one of the chairs which he had, a century before, offered to her.

"What have I done?"

"Just what you ought to have done—believe me, I know!"

IV

The bald-headed man experienced a tremendous reaction of feeling. He would have gone completely to pieces if left to himself. But his partner in crime pulled him together—literally and figuratively she got him on his feet. In the first place, she convinced him that no one but themselves knew anything about it. They were safe. The chance had been there—she wouldn't deny that, the horror and the tremor of it still shook them—but they had

come through triumphant. They had witnessed an accident—it really was an accident, she made it very plain, and the justice of her classification couldn't be entirely denied—an accident which, after all, they might as well *not* have witnessed . . .

She had said all this—she said it speaking very fast and low in that peculiar voice of hers which is deep and yet light—she displayed an unexpected eloquence. But, on the other hand, there were many things she omitted to say, sides which she entirely seemed to discount. She discounted all along the bare fact of death, the central fact that a human life had been lost, by whatever means—the bald-headed man had the ensuing years in which to consider that—and she utterly overlooked any good points their victim might have possessed when sober. He must even have been the source of many benefits—otherwise, why his importance?—with which she ungratefully refused to credit him. The bald-headed man, if he hadn't been so upset, might have held for him a sort of brief. But Matilda Jones didn't care about that. She made it clear what she cared about now was turning a presentable escort out of a being utterly diswrought.

Together they went to look for the other members of their party, the other girl and the man whose entertainment the present occasion really was. A waiter cut short their search with the information that the pair had gone on to a nearby cabaret show, and had left word for the others to follow them. That sentry was successfully passed.

They found their party without difficulty and immediately expressed surprise at the absence of the third man. But it seemed he had gone in search of them and hadn't since come back. The four looked about a little in a perfunctory sort of way and waited, on the chance he would appear, and then returned to the original scene of their revelries. Strangely enough, the missing man didn't materialize there either, so they finally decided to go home without him. It is to be remembered that the second pair were hardly in a condition to hold very tenaciously to any quest, and the first had sufficient reasons for not pressing it. They all reached the happy conclusion that the man had picked up with other friends and would be well able to take care of himself.

The diminished party found a secluded table at an hour comparatively late, and the bald-headed man and Matilda Jones descended from their high estate long enough each to consume a fair measure of excellent whiskey—quite straight. The big, fast automobile was brought to life. Wraps were produced. They swept away over miles of dark sea-scented road, and at last through city streets silent with the early dawn. Matilda Jones took off her hat and laid her soft golden head upon the shoulder of the bald-headed man. Part of the time she slept. The next morning he discovered traces of her sojourn still visible upon his coat-lapel—gold and fairy dust.

V

It was not the next morning, but the morning after that, I think, that his newspaper faced him with the news for which he had been waiting. He who had figured in his every thought—figured waking and sleeping so that the bald-headed man cried aloud for deliverance—was found almost before he had been lost He was found tossed up on the shore about a mile from the hotel where he and a party of friends had dined—not wisely but too well. He had been seen to wander off alone after dinner and he must have fallen into the water.

There followed a period when the surviving four bore witness to a number of separate facts—the man's condition, the last sight they had of him, the conclusion they had reached, as he didn't come back to them, that he had gone off with other friends, their hesitancy—on the day immediately following—to stir up a fuss. A man's whereabouts were, after all, his own affair.

The other girl and the host took the lead with their theories and excuses, and Miss Jones and the bald-headed man followed. Their names were part of the day's news and then public interest in the affair lapsed.

The luck held to the end. It became increasingly certain that no one had overheard the quarrel, no one had seen the three together. . . . I suppose the whole disaster was Matilda Jones' fault. She was responsible for the quarrel. She—who represented herself as an expert swimmer—had even interfered with her companion's bungling efforts at rescue. And yet it cannot be denied that it was she who had woven a wearable cloth from a most unpromising thread. It was her level-headedness, her judgment, her perfection of innocence and surprise that had kept out the suspicion which otherwise might insidiously have crept in.

The bald-headed man meets her occasionally, she bows to him at the places of public entertainment which they both frequent. He sees her, also, with the footlights between and she always awards him a very sweet smile. Now she is leaving the stage. Years have gone by—three, I think it is—and she is about to make an extraordinarily brilliant marriage with a young man of great fashion. As for the bald-headed man himself, he is as unimportant as ever he was. He tires of the dulness of his life and is thinking of going to the war. They will take him in the ordnance department at least. In spite of not being, naturally, a fighter, he would like to be allowed even nearer the firing line. He hopes that the ordnance department will prove merely a beginning.

Up to the present writing the adventure just related is the only one he ever had. If he succeeds in his purpose of going to the war he may have others. He has seen a drawing of a regiment of men being driven into the sea, struggling as the waves engulf them.

LOVE SONG

By Muna Lee

HOW should I find words to say
When all the words are yours,
And you have turned a silver key
Upon your silver stores?

Not words, not words, shall speak the love
My lips grow shy to say;
But it shall bloom from the branching years,
Fresh-petalled every day.

WOMAN never does anything wrong: she does some things at the wrong time.

HE WANTED IT

By James Bennett

IT was New Year's Eve. Through the tavern door came jauntily an old man, with white hair and cheeks as red as an apple. He entered the café alone. Yet he seemed to feel confident that he was among friends. For as he ranged up alongside the lunch *au gratis*, he discoursed in a loud and by no means uncertain voice; never raising his head, nor looking around to see if anyone listened. Said he:

"I have never wanted anything badly enough. That's what's the matter with me! When I was a youngster in school an art scholarship awaited the student who excelled in drawing. My work was considered the best. And then, somehow, I lost interest. The second best man took the course. He is today a top-notch magazine illustrator.

"My dad wanted me to be a doctor. I worked hard, and prepared for medical school. And I was lucky enough to pass with honors in every subject. When the thing seemed too easy, I no longer wanted it.

"I paid suit to a girl, no inferior slavey, but the belle of the town. Perhaps I could have won her had I tried. I courted her for a long time with indifferent success. But one night her manner changed, and she gave me every opportunity to propose. Strange as it may seem, I let the opportunity pass. The chase was over, and I was no longer sure that I wanted her.

"Later on, after years of discouragement, the outlook began to brighten. A financier, whose name occasionally appears in the public prints, offered me a chance at big business, saying that he himself as a young man would have asked for no better start. But I hesitated. Someone else, you see, had married my girl. And I had nothing in particular to work for, the way I would be required to work, night and day, to achieve success. So I turned down the offer. I no longer wanted it."

"I received by accident a real tip on the market, and I put the savings of years all on one pitch and toss. I won. For the first time in my life I had more money than I knew what to do with. But I frittered it away, a hundred here, a thousand there, on any active stock that offered. I no longer wanted it.

"In a Madison Avenue boarding-house, one day, I ran across a siren of the she-vamp type. I knew well her reputation, how she had ruined many a better man than me, and boasted of it. But forewarned though I was, I went out of my way to be with her. I was following closely in the footsteps of Kipling's fool, when suddenly the sport palled. I merely wearied of the game. That was all. I no longer wanted—"

"Here you are, sir!" interrupted the bar boy.

Sending his glance across at me, he tapped his forehead, grinned, and gave an exaggerated wink. He had placed a foaming bock directly in front of this long-winded madman who, eyeing attentively the beer, drew a solitary coin from his pocket.

"Here's your nickel," he replied, "I no longer want it." His gaze remained fixed upon the bock before him, but his face changed. It was self-evident to all, judging from his expression, that a

terrific struggle was taking place within him.

"I no longer want it." He almost shouted this time his oft-repeated declaration, looking violently about him, as if to court contradiction. But none ventured to dispute his assertion.

"I no longer want—" he began, but broke off and his fingers curved about the glass.

"I no longer . . ." His hand had now automatically carried the beverage to his lips, he sipped it tentatively, then tossed it off at a single draught. Hastily putting down the empty glass, he glared about him, as if he had been the victim of a contemptible trick. Then, without another word, he passed hurriedly out.

The bartender, with the little drawer of the cash register open before him, looked carelessly at the nickel in his hand. Then he scrutinized it minutely. It was an ordinary piece of lead.

WIND IN THE SPRING

By Charles Divine

FOR there she walked, her dress like gold,
That lit the winding, singing streets;
And Spring, new blossoms for the old,
Comes back to torture me with sweets.

To lead me down a scented way,
With wind-dipped fingers soft as this—
Oh, Spring, you've caught her very breath,
And memorized her gypsy kiss!

WATERLOO

By June Gibson

VAN TUYL was there. . . .
She was as fascinating as a bottle of mucilage.
The lights went out.
So did Van Tuyl.

GETTING UNMARRIED

A PLAY IN ONE ACT

By Winthrop Parkhurst

PERSONS

HAROLD STATES.
MARY STATES, *his wife.*

THE scene is the dining-room in the States' apartment; that is to say, the ordinary dining-room that is to be found in the ordinary apartment. The table is laid for breakfast. On one side of that round-topped piece of furniture sits Mr. States. On the other side sits his wife. Both are nominally engaged in eating breakfast. Accurately, however, neither is very busy eating, since more important matters are hanging ominously in the air. In fact, to be quite accurate, a quarrel is brewing rapidly and threatening to precipitate itself at any moment, and for purposes of self-protection Mr. States has hid carefully behind that bulwark of tradition, the morning newspaper. For a few moments, as the clouds bank and blacken, he pays no attention outwardly to the storm which threatens him: he calmly goes on reading the paper while his wife, thwarted in her desire for a quarrel that will probably end to her advantage, can only glare her indignation. But the situation is one that cannot last long: it is too tense. Having come to the end of her stock of patience she suddenly bursts out.

MARY:

Harold! Harold, you're not listening to me.

HAROLD:

(*He puts down his paper with exaggerated politeness.*) Certainly, my dear, I am listening to you.

MARY:

(*Angrily.*) I don't believe you've heard a word I said.

HAROLD:

How absurd! Of course I have. . . . What did you say?

MARY:

Just because we've been married ten years is no reason why you have got to read base-ball scores every morning at the breakfast table.

HAROLD:

But I wasn't reading base-ball scores. You do me an injustice. I hate base-ball. I think it's the most stupid, ridiculous, nonsensical game that was ever invented. . . . I was reading the stock market.

MARY:

Well, probably you think the stock market is more important than the happiness of your wife, so go on reading it. I wouldn't interrupt you for the world. (*She bites a roll savagely.*)

HAROLD:

My dear wife! My darling wife!

Since the stock market is paying for the food you are putting into your mouth at this very moment I should say that it had quite a good deal to do with your happiness.

MARY:

Don't try to be clever!

HAROLD:

I'm not trying to be clever. I am merely stating a fact. . . . Now what is your particular trouble this morning? Do you want a new hat?

MARY:

Yes; that's just like a man.

HAROLD:

Oh, you're going to blame me for my sex, are you?

MARY:

(*Angrily.*) When anything goes wrong men always think they can fix it all up by promising to give us a new hat!

HAROLD:

(*Blandly.*) The belief is founded on a certain element of truth, nevertheless, my dear . . . But what *is* your trouble? Has the cook left again? Shall I write you a cheque for a hundred thousand dollars?

MARY:

(*Freezingly.*) Your coffee's getting cold. You'd better drink it.

HAROLD:

(*With a sigh.*) My coffee has been cold a long time. I didn't speak to you about it because I don't like to complain about the same thing every single morning.

MARY:

Oh, I think you're perfectly horrid.

HAROLD:

Yes, most people *are* at breakfast.

MARY:

You're always complaining about something.

HAROLD:

Yes, there's a great deal to complain about in this house. I'm very sorry.

MARY:

You don't love me the least bit any more. I can see that by your actions very plainly.

HAROLD:

(*Agreeably.*) Well—shall we get a divorce, then?

MARY:

(*Accusingly.*) You know I believe you'd *like* to get a divorce.

HAROLD:

(*A little wearily.*) I have long since given up consulting my preferences in any matter. I merely suggested a divorce because I thought *you'd* like one.

MARY:

Haven't I been a good wife to you? Haven't I always tried to do my duty?

HAROLD:

My dear, you have not only tried; several times you have succeeded.

MARY:

Have I given you any cause to complain? Any cause at all?

HAROLD:

None! None whatever.

MARY:

Then why do you suggest our getting a divorce? No! You needn't answer that question. *I know why.* There is some woman.

HAROLD:

Mary, now don't be absurd.

MARY:

Yes! I have thought you were acting peculiarly for a long time—Harold. Now I understand why.

HAROLD:

Mary, don't be perfectly absurd. And don't call me Harold that way. It sounds so ridiculous.

MARY:

Your name is Harold, isn't it?

HAROLD:

Certainly my name is Harold. But I—

MARY:

Then I shall use it in addressing you.

HAROLD:

Oh! . . . Say, you've certainly got—No. I won't say it after all.

MARY:

What were you going to say—Harold?

HAROLD:

Nothing.

MARY:

You were going to say something. I insist upon knowing what it was.

HAROLD:

You insist?

MARY:

I insist.

HAROLD:

(*With a sigh.*) Very well . . . I was merely going to say that you've certainly got the devil of a temper this morning.

MARY:

Oh!

HAROLD:

I hope you're satisfied.

MARY:

If acting like a perfect boor is your ambition in life, Harold States, I hope you realize you have nothing more to live for.

HAROLD:

Thanks.

MARY:

You're welcome.

HAROLD:

Well, if you're going to behave like an absolute child I suppose I may as well go back to my stock-market. (*He retires behind his paper.*)

MARY:

Yes, that *is* a rather appropriate place—for *animals.* (*He shoots an angry glance over the top of his paper and retires again. There is a short pause. Suddenly he lays the paper down.*)

HAROLD:

Look, here, Mary. What's all this getting us, anyhow?

MARY:

What's what getting us?

HAROLD:

You know what I mean. This perpetual squabbling. I say it's infernally childish.

MARY:

Why do you do it, then?

HAROLD:

Oh, I don't know, unless it's simply because we've been married for twelve years and—

MARY:

Ten years.

HAROLD:

Oh, is it only ten? Well, ten then. And—

MARY:

You see! You don't even remember how long you've been married.

HAROLD:

Why come! Any man's apt to overestimate a little thing like that.

MARY:

No. Not unless his mind is wrapped up in some other woman.

HAROLD:

Oh! You're going to start *that* nonsense again.

MARY:

Well, deny it then. Why don't you deny it?

HAROLD:

I have denied it—about eighteen thousand times. You *know* I'm not interested in a single woman in the world.

MARY:

No. Apparently not even in your own wife.

HAROLD:

Don't be absurd.

MARY:

Well, if you love me why don't you say so once in a while? But probably you don't . . . do you?

HAROLD:

Well, I have lived with you now for thirteen years, Mary, and—

MARY:

Ten!

HAROLD:

I mean ten. I have lived with you for ten years, so just consider that if I still loved you with any great passion I'd be one of the most remarkable husbands in the world. Why, I guess I'd be absolutely unique.

MARY:

Don't try to be cynical. You're always trying to be cynical.

HAROLD:

I am not trying to be cynical. I am merely trying to state a fact.

MARY:

Oh! In other words, then, you *are* tired of me. You as much as confess it.

HAROLD:

(*Sipping his coffee.*) Well, in a way—yes, I suppose I am.

MARY:

You're certainly frank about it

HAROLD:

Why not be frank?

MARY:

I suppose you'd like to get a divorce, right this morning.

HAROLD:

(*Taking another sip.*) Well, in a way—yes, I suppose I would.

MARY:

Oh, you would! And then, I suppose, you would like to run off and marry some other woman. Is that it?

HAROLD:

Well, in a *way*, you know—yes, I suppose it is.

MARY:

Harold States, you are a brute. Yes, a brute.

HAROLD:

(*Engagingly.*) I'm glad you take it so calmly, Mary, because it proves to me that—in a way—you would like to do very much the same sort of thing yourself.

MARY:

You think so?

HAROLD:

I do.

MARY:

(*After a short pause.*) Well, Harold. For once in your life you're right. I would.

HAROLD:

(*Pleased.*) You would.

MARY:

(*Emphatically.*) I would.

HAROLD:

(*Setting down his cup and staring at his wife in frank amazement and admiration.*) Mary, you're a trump. You've got more common sense in your blood than I ever thought you had.

MARY:

Oh, I suppose you've imagined that I've always been absolutely madly in love with you.

HAROLD:

My dear, you don't flatter me on my knowledge of human nature. Of course, I never imagined any such absurd thing.

MARY:

I guess you thought I simply hung on every word you said.

HAROLD:

Not in the least. Not any more than I hung on yours.

MARY:

Oh, there have been plenty of men who have been interested in me—and who have interested me.

HAROLD:

I believe it, my dear. I believe it.

MARY:

Oh, you don't *know—!*

HAROLD:

(*Arguing the matter.*) After all, why shouldn't there be? You're certainly an attractive woman—a decidedly attractive woman. As a matter of fact, you're so attractive that if you weren't my wife I rather think I could fall in love with you this very minute, myself.

MARY:

You needn't imagine that you can make me change my mind now by paying me compliments at this late hour.

HAROLD:

I have no intention of trying to make you change your mind . . . Which one of your numerous admirers do you plan to marry—that is, when we are divorced?

MARY:

Which one? I don't know. I haven't made up my mind.

HAROLD:

You mean one man's about as good as another? As long as it isn't me?

MARY:

I didn't say that, did I?

HAROLD:

No. But I think you meant to imply it.

MARY:

You seem to know a great deal about what I mean.

HAROLD:

I hope I haven't been living with you twelve—ten years for nothing.

MARY:

Of course, *you*, I suppose, have already picked out some woman. Men always do.

HAROLD:

Not at all. What an idea!

MARY:

Oh, you needn't think you can fool me as easily as that!

HAROLD:

You needn't believe me if you don't choose to. It's a fact, nevertheless.

MARY:

You mean you don't know *who* you want to marry—when we are divorced?

HAROLD:

Exactly.

MARY:

(*Choosing her words with dangerous precision.*) In other words, Harold, one woman is just about as good as another—as long as it isn't me. Is that it?

HAROLD:

Exactly. To a T.

MARY:

Thank you.

HAROLD:

You're welcome.

MARY:

(*With hard intensity.*) If you want

to know what I think of you, Harold States, I think you are a beast—a perfect beast.

HAROLD:

First it's a brute. Then it's a beast. We'll have a regular menagerie here pretty soon . . . I don't remember having called *you* any names, when you told me the very same thing a moment ago.

MARY:

(*Bitterly.*) Why, Harold, you haven't even got the excuse of having lost your head over somebody!

HAROLD:

No. I seem to be in just the same boat as you, don't I?

MARY:

Why—why, you want to leave me just because you're tired of me. Why—why—(*She suddenly bursts into tears.*)

HAROLD:

Oh, pshaw! Now we're going to have some hysterics. (*He gets up and going around to his wife pats her roughly on the shoulder.*) Don't cry, Mary. Please don't cry.

MARY:

(*Dabbing her eyes.*) Why—why—you want to leave me just because you're—you're tired of me.

HAROLD:

Oh, come. Don't cry like that, Mary. Please. Be calm. Be brave. Be courageous. Let's look this matter sensibly in the face.

MARY:

(*Weeping gently.*) You don't love me any more. I know you don't.

HAROLD:

(*Cheerfully.*) Well, supposing I don't. Why is it?

MARY:

You're in love with some other woman. That's why it is. Yes it is, too.

HAROLD:

No, that's not the reason, and you know it isn't, Mary. If I don't love you any more, there is only one reason in the world why I don't. Do you know why it is?

MARY:

No—no—

HAROLD:

It's because you're my wife. It's because we're married. (*Sits down and commences eating again.*)

MARY:

Because we're—*married?*

HAROLD:

Yes. That's the reason you don't really love me any more, either. It's because I'm your husband. It's because we're married. That's why I suggested getting a divorce just now. You see, if we were divorced, we'd probably both fall in love with each other immediately and then everything would be all right again.

MARY:

(*Brightening a little.*) Yes, but Harold, if we were divorced there wouldn't be any use in your loving me or my loving you. If we were divorced you'd go and live with somebody else.

HAROLD:

My dear! Haven't I just told you? If we were divorced there is only one person in the world I'd really think of living with—you. I'm sure of it.

MARY:

Yes, but Harold—if we were di- I *couldn't* live with you. Don't you see? It would be immoral.

HAROLD:

Immoral? Oh, certainly! Of course. That's the principal reason I want to do it.

MARY:

(*Open-eyed.*) You mean you want to live with me that way because it would be—wicked?

HAROLD:

Yes. Because it would be wicked and exciting and romantic and altogether delightful. As it is, what fun is there in the way we're living now? It's a bore. That's what it is. It's worse than a bore. Why, half the time we fight like a cat and dog, and the other half we don't speak. Take this morning for example. It's a pretty fair sample of nearly every breakfast we've had for the last twel— I mean ten years. Isn't it, now?

MARY:

I suppose so.

HAROLD:

And it's likely to be a pretty fair sample of every breakfast we're going to have for the next ten years. Isn't it?

MARY:

Not if we don't want it to be.

HAROLD:

(*Impatiently.*) Oh, wanting's got nothing to do with it. We're married. I tell you *that's* the whole trouble. It's the trouble with practically all the unhappy couples in the world. I'm absolutely sure of it. It isn't that a man and a woman can't live together a great many years and be happy. No. It's that they can't live together and be *tied* and be happy. It's being tied that makes the mischief. That's our trouble right now. We're tied, tied, tied. And look at us—bored to death.

MARY:

(*With dignity.*) Of course, if you really feel that way about it, Harold, I will release you at once.

HAROLD:

Oh, go and be gloomy about it. That's another thing about this marriage business: it makes everybody so confoundedly gloomy and serious.

MARY:

I'm sure I didn't mean to—

HAROLD:

Oh, you didn't mean to be gloomy and serious, my dear. I know. But you see, you were, nevertheless. And why? Because you're married. It's natural, it's instinctive, it's inevitable. The aim of the whole marriage institution, apparently, is to remind us every single day of our lives of what a terrifically serious thing we've gone and done. Why, the first thing you and I promised the minister was to stick to each other even if you got leprosy and goitre, and I lost all my money and turned drunkard. Do you remember the words, Mary? I do. I've never been able to forget 'em. For "better, for *worse*, for richer, for *poorer*, till *death* us do part." Cheerful little ditty to start out business on. What?

MARY:

Harold, dear. Do you know you're talking perfect foolishness?

HAROLD:

No. I'm talking *about* perfect foolishness. What I say is, How can romance possibly survive more than a few days or a few weeks under a contract that's just about as cheerful as a coroner's report?

MARY:

I don't know—

HAROLD:

Neither do I. That's why I say we've got to get a divorce.

MARY:

Well, anyway, you'd better finish your breakfast first or you'll be late at the office. Why, do you know what time it is? (*She glances at the mantel clock.*) It's almost nine o'clock!

HAROLD:

I'm not going to the office today, so I don't care *what* time it is.

MARY:

You're not going to the office today?

HAROLD:

No.

MARY:

Why not?

HAROLD:

(*Succinctly.*) I'm going to get divorced instead.

MARY:

Harold! You don't really mean that!

HAROLD:

But look here. I thought you wanted me to. I thought we'd thrashed it all out just now and decided that we'd be much happier together if we were separated—legally.

MARY:

Yes, I know . . . We did. And I suppose, Harold dear, that in a way you're right. But, Harold, dear (*her voice softens*), if we get a real divorce now, how could I be perfectly sure that you wouldn't run off some day with somebody—and leave me?

HAROLD:

You couldn't be sure, my dear. That's the beauty of it.

MARY:

The beauty of it!

HAROLD:

Certainly. Don't you understand? You couldn't be sure of me and I couldn't be sure of you—dead sure. That's the reason we'd get along so well. A little uncertainty? Why, it's the very essence of romance. Any day *I* may disappear, and any day *you* may disappear. You'll never be quite certain whether I'm coming home or not. And then if I do come home—as I most probably shall—I will always be thinking as I open the front door: "Now I wonder if she's still here after all. Wouldn't it be damned jolly if she was!"

MARY:

(*Touched.*) Harold, dear, you'd really think that about me?

HAROLD:

You bet your life I would—if we were divorced. And then, when we sat down to dinner we could get just as slushy as we pleased. We wouldn't be married, you see, so it wouldn't seem silly. We'd always be on our best. That's what would keep the thing going. We'd always be wondering "When is it all going to end, when is it all going to end?"

MARY:

I wonder if it would end, Harold.

HAROLD:

Perhaps. You never can tell about anything till you try it once. But I think it would be worth trying. Don't you?

MARY:

Yes, I think it would.

HAROLD:

Then you'll really put it through with me? You'll really do it?

MARY:

As soon as you say the word!

HAROLD:

Mary, you're a trump. Yes, you're a trump. There's not another woman that would go into it with that spirit. Not another one.

MARY:

Perhaps, dear, because there's not another man who would ask her to.

HAROLD:

(*Like a boy with a new toy.*) Say! Won't it be jolly, though?

MARY:

And wicked!

HAROLD:

That's right. And wicked . . . You know, I can hardly wait.

MARY:

You know, neither can I.

HAROLD:

You know, I wish we were divorced right this very minute.

MARY:

You know, so do I.

HAROLD:

(*With an air of triumph.*) I tell you what, Mary!

MARY:

What?

HAROLD:

We are divorced.

MARY:

What do you mean? We'll pretend?

HAROLD:

Yes. What's the use of waiting, anyhow?

MARY:

That's so. What's the use of waiting?

HAROLD:

We can pretend we have left our lawyer this morning. We can pretend that everything's all settled up; the paper signed—everything!

MARY:

Harold! How wonderful that would be, wouldn't it?

HAROLD:

(*Admonishing.*) Now wait a minute. Don't go and spoil it all. Wait till I give you a signal. We don't want to have it seem as if we had planned it out beforehand, you know.

MARY:

No, of course not.

HAROLD:

We'll be sitting here, you see—quarreling.

MARY:

Just as we've always done.

HAROLD:

Yes, just as we've always done.

MARY:

And then?

HAROLD:

Then I'll give you the signal. That'll mean the decree is granted.

MARY:

Harold! How wonderful.

HAROLD:

From that moment forth we are free—free to do as we like.

MARY:

Harold! How wonderful.

HAROLD:

Now wait a minute. (*He takes a sip of coffee, and suddenly puts down the cup with a clatter, scowling fearfully.*) My God! Cold as ice as usual. (*He bites into a roll.*) Tough! Of course. Tough as shoe-leather. (*He glares at his wife.*) What the devil sort of a household do you call this, anyhow? What the devil sort of a—

MARY:

(*Dangerously sweet.*) Snapping as usual—darling?

HAROLD:

I guess I've got a right to complain about the food in my own house haven't I? And you're my wife anyhow, aren't you? (*He stops short.*) Ha! . . . (*He suddenly gets up, and with a miraculous change of mood goes to his wife and puts his arms tenderly around her.*) Mary! . . . Mary, I haven't any right to ask you. But will you run away with me—today?

MARY:

My dear! My dear, I haven't any right to say yes. So—I'm going to! (*They kiss.*)

CURTAIN.

ON BEING TAUGHT TO SWIM

By Jane Terrill

I SAT on the beach watching the bathers splashing in the cool green water.

My bathing-suit was of yellow silk that gleamed in the sunshine like a topaz and on my feet were silken slippers and on my head was a gold cap, tied with a mauve ribbon.

I longed to be in the water and wriggle my toes and splash the drops over my shoulders with my fingers.

A tall, jet-haired, bronze-cheeked man came to me.

"Let me teach you to swim," he said.

He put his strong arm about me and held my chin above the water and showed me how to move my body and spoke to me softly and laughed aloud when I clumsily splashed water in his face.

With his arm beneath my shoulder we floated together.

We were a mile from shore when he was seized with a cramp. . . .

I rescued him from drowning without disarranging the mauve ribbon on my bathing-cap.

SALUT D'AMOUR

By W. L. D. Bell

WHEN we look gravely into each other's eyes
Over the rim of our raised glasses,
Gazing into each other's souls
Just before pouring Martini cocktails down our respective æsophagi,
I taste the piquant fringe of your loveliness.

And,
After the operation,
When we again gaze into each other's souls
You have suddenly grown
So much more beautiful,
That I call the waiter,
And order more cocktails.

THE MIRACULOUS IMAGE

By Vincent Starrett

I

"WHAT has happened here," continued the little professor, "is not so readily determined. Seismatic disturbances, of course, are not uncommon, but this destruction seems to be of comparatively recent occurrence. The mound would seem to have been deliberately tunneled and blown up. However, our investigation doubtless will disclose the reason somewhere underneath the heap."

The Mexican laborers crossed themselves superstitiously and swung their picks again, while the group of Americans in helmets and linen stood by, curiously. From time to time one of the party prodded the enormous mound of earth with his cane, and then examined the sharp ferrule of the stick attentively. The great *cuyo,* despite its fallen and sunken appearance, still reared to a height of more than fifty feet, and the overthrown earth at its ends gave it a length in excess of thrice that figure. The excavators bored in from the side, hoping thus to strike a central chamber unaffected by the puzzling demolition of the exterior.

The ruin, however, appeared complete. What had been the burial vault, when some tons of earth and a wall of basalt eventually had been forced, was found to be filled up with rocks and clay descended from the roof and ceiling. The most common evidences of Toltec or Aztec civilization—obsidian knives, terra-cotta heads, whistles, spoons, and fragments of red clay pottery—were missing. They seemed to have stumbled upon a ravished tumulus.

Then, toward dusk, a half-naked native came shuddering out of the tunnel and reported a grewsome discovery. . . . It was all that remained of the body of a man. Not an ancient and shattered skeleton, nor yet a mummy. Modern spurs were strapped to the moldering boots and evidences of festival garb adhered to the sorry remains.

"Undoubtedly it is the tomb of a very great chief," the little professor had said, adjusting his spectacles importantly, earlier in the day; but he was shocked by the revelation of his hireling.

The resurrection of other bodies, startlingly contemporaneous, still further amazed the worthy scientist. As the light waned, there were seven; and a collection of neoteric firearms and knives bearing the names of American manufacturers.

"When the Spaniards invaded Mexico, four centuries ago, these mounds were already ancient," remarked the professor, speculatively. He added, with a curious look at his companions, "But these men were alive and wicked less than six months ago."

II

JOSE GONZALES, trudging home from the hills on a summer evening, rolled his dark eyes about him apprehensively. He noted with alarm the deepening shadows yet to be encountered and passed. His superstitious soul quailed each evening before the ordeal of darkness, and it was in an ecstasy of terror that he ran the gamut of his fears. He prayed fervently as he progressed, asking only that he might reach without mishap the hut he called home. A sil-

ver moon rode the sky, flooding the trail with weirdly subdued light. The shadows were darker for its presence.

He breathed a sigh of relief as he emerged onto the flat; an explosive sigh, indicative of intaken breath held to the point of suffocation. When he had skirted the Balsas river for a piece and had come into sight of his dwelling—a tiny house thatched with broad palmetto leaves—something of his gay morning spirit returned.

He was whistling softly a bar or two of *La Golondrina* as he crossed his small field of growing corn, and by the time he had plunged through the last group of *papayas* and reached his doorsill his accustomed bravado was serenely evident.

With his family he feared nothing. It was, in some part, for his family that his gravest fears were entertained when his distrustful eye scanned that last gloomy stretch of hills.

It has been asserted that the trouble with Mexico is that it is filled with Mexicans; but that may be qualified. The trouble with Mexico is that it is filled with *bad* Mexicans. Of these the maritime state of Guerrero has a goodly percentage, for the splendid recesses of the Sierra Madre del Sur would seem to have been designed by profligate nature for the lurking spots of hill bandits.

Yet there are good Mexicans. José Gonzales might have been so characterized. Driller and blaster in the *Mariposa del Oro* mine, he was not unreasonably dishonest and lazy, and he asked little more than to be left alone to whatever innocent pursuits his versatile and superstitious fancy might suggest.

"My father!" said the slim beauty who greeted him affectionately on the threshold, and he patted her dark, rounded shoulder proudly.

He bestowed a good-humored smile upon the pudgy Indian woman that was her mother.

His family was his boast. With a grunt of deep satisfaction he reached for his cigarettes and sniffed the seductive odors of a hot meal in preparation. He was brave enough now. Marauding bandits would do well not to invest the sanctity of his home. . . . In the corner a tiny image of the Virgin of Guadelupe, the central figure of a miniature shrine, looked over the scene with sad, painted eyes. The image was the work of José Gonzales, whose facility with a knife and a block of wood fell little short of genius.

Thus the good Mexican. The bad Mexican, as the meal progressed, was still some miles away, but riding hard despite the darkness, toward the Gonzales domicile. Behind the bad Mexican rode as desperate a band of ruffians as the country might exhibit. The bad Mexican was called Zubaran, and he was a bandit chieftain of unsavory repute. What he expected to gain at the humble house of José Gonzales might have been gleaned from a brief conversation between himself and his chief lieutenant, some hours before, when the latter had asked a question.

"He has nothing," protested the lieutenant, impatiently.

"He has a daughter," leered Zubaran, "who is good to look upon."

This whimsical desperado wasted no time. He rode picturesquely through the corn and almost into the door of the hut before he dismounted. His followers lounged at the four corners in desultory fashion.

"*Nombre de Dios!* They have come!" shrieked the hunted father, leaping to his feet. The pudgy Indian woman rushed to the door with arms outstretched imploringly, but she crumpled over the threshold at the report of Zubaran's revolver. Her short, fat arms hung grotesquely over the step and her black hair fell forward in the dirt. . . . Inside, a terrified girl screamed, and there was the flash of José Gonzales' rifle.

Zubaran's weapon flew from his hand. He cursed shrilly, wringing his torn fingers; but through the open window one of his followers dropped the frantic father with a single shot. A wicked knife was twisted from the hand of the tigerish girl, who still fought.

In a few minutes the tragedy was complete. . . .

III

THE moon shone whitely on the bandit leader as, from his saddle, he glanced through the open door. All was quiet within. He smiled in amused fashion and kissed his wounded and bandaged fingers to the still figure of the girl. His horse's hoof spurned the huddled body of the Indian woman as he turned away. . . .

Morning found the scene unchanged, save that the daughter of José Gonzales stirred slightly. Still later, she dragged herself to her knees and crawled painfully to her father. José Gonzales sat upon a plank bench, his arms lashed to the broken back, his head fallen forward. A clot of blood and cloth was visible beneath his left arm.

"My father!" moaned the girl, touching his knee timidly. And after several minutes: "My Rafaela!" whispered José Gonzales.

She staggered to her feet, clutching dizzily at a table, and managed to cut his bonds.

When her head had cleared she made shift to bandage his wound, cutting away the cloth from his side, and washing the angry furrow left by the bandit's lead. She saw that it was a severe wound, but not necessarily a dangerous one, and her skill acquired from her Indian mother soon put him at greater ease. But he was very weak, and, more, his heart was broken, although untouched by the bullet. . . . The dead body of his martyred wife lay where it had fallen until the girl conveyed it painfully to the cot where she had been wont to sleep.

When all was done that could be done she came again to her father's side and knelt beside him.

"My father," she murmured. "You saw it all?"

"I saw it," said José Gonzales dully. "It was for that I was tied here . . . to see . . . and then to die."

"No!" She sprang to her feet with sudden energy and bared her breast. "You must live . . . to avenge us . . . my mother and me. It is I who must die! O my father, listen to me!"

She knelt again beside him and pressed a knife into his hand. Her voice was shrill and eager, triumphant.

"It is I who must die," she repeated, "before I am killed by my shame! You will recover . . . I can tell. A few days and you will be strong enough again. Then, my father, you will seek the coward, Zubaran, and then . . ." She laughed softly . . . "you will know what to do!"

He looked at the knife curiously, turning it over and over in his hands, and Rafaela laughed again.

"It is for me," she cried with pride. "You shall drive it into my heart, my father, for after what has happened I must not live. Do not fear to do as I ask, for I will love you for it. It is best."

For a moment more he stared at her, uncomprehending, and then he straightened proudly.

"You are right," he said quietly. "You are my true daughter. I am proud of you. Good-bye, my Rafaela!"

"Kiss me first, my father!" she whispered, and he bent his lips to her brow. "You will not forget . . . Zubaran!"

IV

THE *Mariposa del Oro*, or Golden Butterfly, mine lies in the mountainous district near the town of Pungarabato, and was some five miles from the abode of José Gonzales. An American superintendent, one Lambert, presided over its rugged destinies. He occupied a serviceable *hacienda* not far from the scene of his labors—an imposing one-story structure of *adobe*, with wide corridors, severe columnar supports, and a picturesque court. Less than half a hundred laborers endured his blasphemy, for the mine was no larger comparatively than the lustrous insect for which it was named. Yet the silver and gold that came from it made it one of the most important in the state.

José Gonzales' absence from duty occasioned small comment at the mine for a day or two; it was assumed he had imbibed too freely of one of the numerous popular drinks, purchased by the natives and avoided as would be a plague by the whites, who know the deadly qualities of native intoxicants and import their whiskey from north of the Rio Grande.

On the third day an investigating party found the missing Gonzales in his hut, nursing a dangerous wound, which, it seemed, had broken out afresh as a result of his unusual exertions burying his wife and daughter. He told his story simply, but with gleaming eyes, dwelling with savage pride upon his own part in the tragedy.

"She was my true daughter," he concluded. "I am proud of what I have done, and when I am well I shall seek her real murderer."

The ferocity of his hungry eyes boded little good to Zubaran.

After his inquisitors had reported on his case the company physician made him a visit and hastened his recovery scientifically . . . and as the days dragged along José Gonzales slowly perfected the scheme of vengeance that had burst upon him one evening as he bowed his head before his private shrine of the Virgin of Guadelupe.

With the patient care of the true craftsman he was carving, now, a larger image of the Virgin. When completed it would be nearly life size. To it he gave all his leisure, and during the slow days of convalescence he had much.

Night and day he carved, reverently and industriously, and when, his wound healed, he went back to his work in the mine, still he kept late hours in his isolated dwelling, hastening the image—his *magnum opus*—to completion.

Came a day when he laid his tools aside and gazed with delighted eyes at the work he had created. It was indeed his masterpiece. He had carved it to the glory of God and the memory of Rafaela, and, when the last touch of native juices had been applied in its coloring, neither but could have praised his labor and his love.

"You are becoming yourself again, *amigo*," remarked Lambert, his superintendent, one day, giving him a cheerful clap on the shoulder. "Your work becomes better, and you are stronger and happier."

Since hearing of José Gonzales' affliction, the brusque American had manifested a more kindly interest in him, and occasionally went out of his way to cheer him.

"*Si, senor*," smiled José Gonzales through his yellow teeth. "*Muchas gracias!* I am stronger, but my work is not yet done, for Zubaran still lives. And my happiness will follow only his death."

"Poor devil!" thought the superintendent, noting the gleam in his eye. "Mad as a hatter, and a very decent Mex, too. But it would be worth going a distance to see his meeting with Zubaran, if it ever comes off. I'd like to be there."

That was a pleasure, however, that was to be denied the American.

V

As driller and blaster in the mine, José Gonzales had a limited access to the company's store of explosives. He was a shrewd fellow though, and his pilferings were small and unobtrusive.

He had plenty of time, and he had no desire to ruin his plans by risking premature discovery of them, at the mine.

The packages that he smuggled home of an evening were small and easily concealed. Each night he noted with joy their increase, and returned thanks to his friendly image for the approval of a just heaven.

Then, on a scorching Sunday, he trudged ten weary miles by unfrequented ways to a familiar spot, where *El Rio de las Balsas* narrowed and became wilder and more turbulent. Across his drooping shoulders he carried the life-sized image of the Virgin of Guadelupe, serenely indifferent at her translation.

When he had reached his destination he stood before a huge Indian mound, dating back to remote antiquity; the burial place of a great chieftain of the Aztecs. Other mounds were near at hand, but the one beside which he stood had been especially chosen by Gonzales for his secret purpose. The reason for it was that the mound had been entered.

Several years before an English exploring party had pierced the tomb as far as its central chamber, and the tunnel remained. . . . Through this sepulchral passage Gonzales, not altogether undisturbed by his surroundings, conveyed his image of the Virgin.

The musty interior increased his nervousness, but a greater purpose than ever had filled him overshadowed his fears.

He made several trips to the great *cuyo*, laden like a beast of burden. His journeys were a week apart, and after the last one he smiled wearily, as if a mammoth task had been at length accomplished. The day following this manifestation he appeared at the mine in a state of suppressed excitement bordering on imbecility. He babbled wildly.

"La Virgen! La Virgen!" was the burden of his cry.

A crush of men immediately surrounded him, *barreteros, ademadores,* laborers from all departments of the mine. After a time the superintendent came bursting through the throng.

"What is it?" he shouted, plunging with shoulder and elbow to the central ring. His gaze fell upon Gonzales, and Gonzales' eyes were alight with a holy fervor.

"La Virgen!" chanted the fanatic in tearful ecstasy. *"The Mother Holy!"*

Lambert snatched his protegé furiously out of the crowd and dragged him away to his office. . . . There he learned that an image of the Virgin, life-size and wondrously lifelike, had miraculously appeared in the empty Pyramid of the Moon.

The superintendent did his best to quell the religious frenzy that swept the camp at the announcement of his *barretero*. Vainly. Gonzales had done his work well, and the story was spreading throughout the state by evening. As it spread it gathered weight and detail.

Nothing so cunningly calculated to appeal to the soul of the Mexican Indian could have been conceived. In a week the forgotten tomb of an antique and unimportant Aztec prince had become a shrine for religious zealots. The church stormed impotently, hurling blanket denials and accusations. It might better have ignored the story. Pilgrimages were made by Indians from other provinces, and a horde of crippled beggars, atrociously maimed and repulsive, journeyed from the capital to worship at the feet of the miraculous image and touch its painted robes with their horrible hands. Candles burned within the gloomy vault, and the black vapor of incense clung like a seafog. It was an incredible travesty.

Meanwhile José Gonzales had disappeared from the mine. . . . Slightly disguised, he was a member of every group that visited the image. His voice was the loudest of those lifted at the shrine, but his restless eyes searched always for a face. . . .

In time, however, the groups fell away; the individual pilgrimages were less frequent as the frenzy passed. Yet the face had not come.

"He will come at night," said José Gonzales to himself, at length, and thereafter he slept nightly in the mouth of the black tunnel. His terror was a thing of the past. He was now a relentless machine, with a single thought. Had his painted creation stepped out of her shrine and spoken to him, his emotion would not have changed by a heartbeat.

Yes, he would come at night. No more superstitious heart beats than within the breast of a Mexican bandit. . . . Zubaran awaited only the passing of the crowds to visit the new Mecca. . . . When he came it was at night,

as José Gonzales had foreseen, and his band rode with him.

Seven in number, they rode down to the ford and crossed the Balsas. José Gonzales heard the pounding of their horses' hoofs on the hard earth, at a distance, and then the splashing of the water as they crossed the river. Softly he rose and stole back into the vault, hiding himself in the deep shadow of a niche dug in the back wall.

Barely twenty feet beyond his eyes rose the miraculous image. Two candles burned blue before her. Behind her now stretched a thin trail of grayish powder, communicating at the base of her pedestal with a hole of insignificant dimensions. But from sole to crown, the gray powder filled her hollow outline.

The watcher heard the horsemen dismount, and the scraping of their bodies against the tunnel's sides.

One by one they entered the chamber, until he had counted seven.

One by one they prostrated themselves before the miraculous image. The candles gleamed in the eyes of the leader as he arose.

"Virgen Santissima!"

The voice of the terrible Zubaran was hushed and fearful. José Gonzales, flat on his stomach behind his sacrilegious petard, grinned wickedly.

Then he opened his lips and gave utterance to a sibilant whisper:

"Zubaran!"

A sudden emotion wiped the color from the bandit's face. His eyes filled with an awful fear, and he sank shuddering to his knees.

For a moment there was no further sound.

Then, with screams of terror, the members of the band flung themselves prostrate beside their leader.

The voice spoke again:

"Zubaran! It is I, Rafaela Gonzales, who speaks! Rafaela, whom you shamed and murdered!"

A low moan was the bandit's only reply. It was followed by a long, convulsive shudder.

With disgusted determination, José Gonzales rose upright. He had expected a denial of the latter charge and a prayer for mercy. Standing directly behind the image he spoke with his own voice.

"See, Zubaran," he called mockingly. "See, my brave *caballero!* It is only I . . . José Gonzales . . . the father of little Rafaela . . . before whom you crouch and shiver like a dog. Rise up, my brave bandit, or I will kill you as you lie!"

The moment of silence that followed fairly shouted.

Then with the snarl of an animal the bandit chieftain scrambled to his feet, dragging his revolver from its holster.

Over the head of the miraculous image appeared the sneering face of José Gonzales. The body was that of the Virgin, but the face . . .

With an oath, Zubaran fired straight into the heart of the image.

A crash and roar that shook the earth succeeded the shot, and the walls and roof of the Pyramid of the Moon fell with a great shout upon José Gonzales and his vengeance.

"LOVE comes but once, and then, perhaps, too late." Too late for what?

MR. CRANE WRITES A POEM

By John Anderson

As the odor of wine clings to the emptied flagon
So does the unrest of youth remain in my heart.

NORMAN CRANE opened a book he had written ten years ago. Had his wife observed him she would have become vaguely curious. Therefore he had locked the door of the library. He never underestimated his wife.

It was a thin book with wide margined pages. It contained poems. The first poem began:

Her eyes were like the smoke of cigarettes,
Vague and luminous and grey. . . ."

"If I changed grey to blue and adjusted the rhyme," murmured Crane to himself, "It might do."

He juggled with the lines for a few moments and then shook his head. The thing was too thin. What he desired was something a bit more urgent. It was his own word—"urgent."

With a sigh he turned the pages, his eyes resting furtively upon lines and phrases here and there. He stopped suddenly and read aloud:

Her nakedness was like an opal mirror.

"That's better," he whispered. "But it would hardly be the thing. I'll use the opal mirror and cut out the nakedness. Make it her face or arm or something."

Uncovering his fountain pen, he compressed his lips and wrote upon the stationery of the Norman Crane Advertising Agency, Inc., which lay on the walnut table before him:

Her cheeks were like mirrors of opal.

At the conclusion of the line he hesitated and began abstractedly to draw little geometrical patterns.

"Rotten!" he whispered to himself and with a sudden decision scratched out what he had written.

His eyes returned to the wide margined pages. A curious smile came to his lips as he read. He had not looked at the book for five years or more. He remembered dimly reading it to Helen on their honeymoon. That was six years ago.

"How the devil did I ever write such things?" he said to himself and the smile passed from his face. As he read an odd laceration weighed his heart. He murmured two lines aloud:

The long, dim fingers of the night
Trail across my face in a blind caress.

"Long, dim fingers of the night," he repeated. "I'll be damned. Of all the fool asses. Long, dim fingers of the night!"

He raised his head and laughed abruptly. When he had finished he turned his eyes toward the window and stared out at the darkness. A wistfulness came to him. He observed the faint outlines of the trees and the blurred exteriors of the buildings across the street. He was conscious of neither dim nor long fingers.

"I'm getting old," he said to himself.

It occurred to him suddenly what a wealth of emotion it must have taken to produce the poems that were in the book he held. He tried to remember writing them. Each phrase as he eyed it stared up at him like some aloof and mocking stranger.

Her eyes gleamed like ripe grapes in the moon.

"How in the name of Heaven did I ever think of that?" he asked himself. He continued to read these lines that grew stranger and less familiar. They seemed to illuminate a world for him that he had never visited.

He raised his voice abruptly and recited from a page:

The noon sun painted the sea with its golden brushes.
The faint wind carved the water into great luminous scrolls.
Sapphire roses and poppies of purple fluttered over its surface.
Emerald shadows glistened against the horizon.
Patches of silver and gold slept to the south.
And to the west the blue and orange water paints curled over the edge of the world.

When he had finished he added:

"Rather pretty. Let's see, how old was I? Twenty-four. Hm. Water paints curled over the edge of the world. . Should have made it water colors."

Crane smiled faintly at his half jest. He turned to the reading of more intimate and passionate verses, lines which seethed with an extravaganza of phrase and color. Here was one which commemorated the "wind ghosts" of a lady's hair. Another which spoke of his heart as "an ashen bag too delicate for dreams." Wild, emotional ravings, delicacies of grief, nuances of joy occupied the greater part of the writing. Now and then a cunningly contrived phrase, posturing like some vivid acrobat upon the page, held his eye. The feeling of awkwardness and slight disdain which the verses had first awakened in him vanished. Instead came a warmth.

When he had concluded the last of the thin volume he whispered to himself,

"Crickets! I'll write something *original!* I can write something *original!*"

With quite a flourish he turned toward the stationery on the table and applied his pen. He carefully wrote down the name, "Marguerite." For a time he eyed the name, casting a few furtive glances at the locked library door. He did not underestimate his wife. Were she to enter suddenly and surprise him writing the name Marguerite upon paper she would penetrate.

This fear which flitted gently through his brain paralysed for the nonce his creative faculties. With a determined effort at concentration, however, he bowed himself over the stationery and began to write slowly:

It rains in my heart.

He stopped there and frowned.

"What the devil," he murmured. "That's—that's Verlaine. Damn it!"

Scratching out the line he began a new after several moments. This time he achieved:

The light of your face shines upon the night—

Again he paused.

"Piffle!" he mumbled. "I guess I'll have to take a few lines to start me off."

He reopened the book and began rereading the poems. As he read the phrases drifted away from him. His own thought threaded through the lines.

He was in love. The fact argued a certain infidelity towards his wife. And yet, barring the social aspects of the thing, he was cheating her of nothing. He entertained the same attitude toward her that had been his before Marguerite had appeared. In fact, he was, in an odd way, more fond of her. Marguerite had awakened something in him.

He stopped trying to follow the unfamiliar lines on the page before him. The memory of Marguerite occupied him. He had known her for a week. Settling back in his chair, he contemplated her with a curious tremolo in

his heart. He wished he was with her, wondering at the same instant whether he was not happier to be where he was and remain thus able to dream of her. On the whole, he was. She had light hair. He seized his pen and wrote on the stationery:

The ghosts of sunbeams live again in her hair.

Here he paused and frowned.

"Why ghosts?" he inquired of himself. "Why not just plain 'sunbeams live again.'"

He suddenly seized the piece of stationery and tore it carefully into small pieces, dropping it into a basket.

She was much, much younger than he was. He congratulated himself on his adroitness in keeping all mention of her from Helen. Helen was not to be underestimated.

"Wine ghosts dance in her eyes," he mumbled aloud. He started to reach for his pen and failed to complete the action.

"Ghosts again! Of all the damned idiots. There's nothing ghostly about Marguerite. It's this blamed book."

He closed the confusing volume with a faint bang and dropped it on the table.

He had eaten heavily at dinner and the room now felt somewhat too warm. He unfastened his collar and tie and removed one of his shoes that pinched him. Thus reduced to comfort, his mind gently launched itself on the subject which, in a manner of speaking, was closer to his heart.

Helen would never know. Even if the affair culminated—culminated—he choked on a phrase. A vague tenderness flooded him. His lean face softened into an incongruous expression. He raised his fingers to his bristly mustache and sighed.

"I didn't know it was in me," he said to himself softly. "To fall in love again, this way."

What in the name of all idiocies had prompted him to tell her he was a poet? He recalled with a wince their conversation in the restaurant on the rainy afternoon he had met her. He had hurried out for a late lunch, hardly able to spare ten minutes from the accumulation of advertising copy on his desk. Nevertheless he had sat for an hour and a half with the woman at the table.

"You aren't a business man, are you, Mr. Crane?" That was toward the end of the first hour. "You don't talk like one."

And then, "Oh, no. I manage to get along even in this day by selling poetry to magazines too indifferent to refuse it."

The light which had come into the young woman's eyes had amply justified the lie.

There was something about the young woman which at first diverted, then lured and finally inspired. He had sat in the restaurant with her four times and had walked with her through the streets twice. During these times he had in some manner managed to maintain the air of a frivolous cynic, a lyrical trifler. And yet all the time love had been in him. He marveled at his control over his emotions. He had not once sought to touch her hand.

The most difficult thing had been, however, the maintaining of an utter secrecy before Helen. Helen was not to be underestimated. There was something subtle about her guesses. He had always found it next to impossible to carry off a lie with her.

"What would happen?"

The question intruded itself abruptly and left a chill in the wake of its going.

Suddenly a distinct revulsion overcame Norman Crane. He straightened in his chair. Why not? Was he then to let himself die? Here was his opportunity to live. He had once lived. He remembered now how the poems had been written. Abandon, devil may care, prejudices and elations. He had been a poet. The Norman Crane Advertising Agency, Inc., was a hideous and preposterous thing to contemplate. It was a smooth, well tended grave, in which he laid himself down daily.

Was he then so old? Forty-four.

A deep breath passed out of him. He remembered his first years in the city—the years before Helen, the years when Helen had first appeared. Glorious years. A strange tumult confused him. He seized the thin book and opening it at random read aloud in a vibrating voice:

My soul is a flaming rendezvous
A monotonous Bacchanal
Where all the Menaids dance but you
Who watch from a moonlit wall.

Norman Crane arose from his chair and walked up and down the room. He felt that a moment of crisis was come. With his third turn down the floor the turbulent sensations which had inspired him to pace, ebbed. He dropped back into his chair. Things subsided gently within the one time flaming rendezvous of Norman Crane.

"I'll send her the book as a gift," he mumbled. "I couldn't write anything now as good without a lot of practise."

That would suffice. He had her address. In a drawer of the table he found a sheet of folded wrapping paper and some string. He wrapped the thin book with it.

There was a knock upon the library door.

"Norman," called a voice, "have you fallen asleep?"

Ah, the irony of it.

"No, Helen, just a minute," he called back.

There was a pause and then the voice, somewhat petulant, somewhat whimsical resumed, "I don't think it's very nice of you to lock yourself away—on my birthday."

A spasm of remorse seized Crane.

"Just one moment," he called. "I haven't forgotten it was your birthday. I've a surprise for you."

Seizing his fountain pen Crane wrote hurriedly across the face of the small parcel he had made of his book of poems—

For my wife, Helen.
In Memoriam.

Clasping the parcel in his hand he sprang from his chair and with a curious light in his eyes, unlocked the door and admitted his wife into the room.

A wave of consummate relief overcame him as Helen took the little bundle from his hand and opened it. With a happy sigh he sat down and removed his other shoe.

THE REWARD

By Louise Richmond Hooley

HE asked me to wait,
Until he made good.
He did.
Today he has a large house,
Servants and motors, two children,
And my best friend.
I'm still waiting.

EPISODE BEHIND A SYNTHETIC PALM

By George B. Jenkins, Jr.

"ALICE," I said, offering her my arm and leading the way toward the conservatory, "I think I shall kiss you."

She came with me readily enough. Too readily, I thought. Whenever a woman is willing to be kissed, she has either been kissed too frequently, or not frequently enough. I do not care to run a kindergarten in osculation, neither do I care to be among the many who have the privilege of a lady's lips.

As we picked our way through the couples that crowded the ballroom floor, I glanced at the girl who walked so lightly beside me. Her land lay quietly in the crook of my arm, and her bare shoulders floated alongside me. Her mouth was small, and scarlet, and quivering.

As she preceded me into the conservatory I noticed a dimple in her shoulder, just above the edge of her gown. My admiration increased.

As she settled into a seat that was shielded from the public gaze by a large and particularly opaque group of artificial palms, she asked me the usual question:

"Why do you want to kiss me?"

Her eyes were large and brilliant, they moved slowly as though realizing that they were effective. Her lids drooped ever so slightly, not concealing the splendour of her eyes.

I started to reply but suddenly remembered that I had just met her. Perhaps I should inquire the rest of her name.

"I called you Alice," I said, "because I heard someone else call you that—"

"'Alice' will do," she replied.

"What is the rest of your name?"

"Do you have to know my name before you will kiss me?"

Again I noticed the vitality of her mouth. It curved lovingly around her words, giving each syllable a caress before its utterance.

"I would like to know something about you," I said. "First, do you scream when you are kissed?"

She smiled, a lazy light flickered in her eyes.

"I never have," she answered.

"Second, are you kissed . . . frequently?"

"Too frequently . . . by some people."

I became mildly angry at the "some people." Why should this dainty woman, so vibrant with the delight of living, be caressed against her will? I promised myself I would discover the scoundrel, and thrash him. Alice should not be annoyed by presumptuous animals, I would attend to them. For the moment I forgot that I was married, and would have difficulty in explaining to my wife this sudden interest in another woman.

She evidently thought I had forgotten her, for she leaned against my shoulder. Her lips were temptingly pursed, and she was evidently waiting.

"Well?" she said.

I possess several clearly definite ideas on this subject which I shall elaborate for your benefit at another time. For the present let me say that a man who kisses a beautiful woman without a survey of the situation is not only a barbarian, he is a fool.

To experience any emotion in its entirety, one should not only enjoy it in

anticipation, and in realization, one should also so participate that afterwards, in retrospection, one will be pleased with one's behavior in the situation. Therefore, I swiftly glanced around, mentally photographed the surroundings, her head bent forward and the full carmine of her lips, and lingered over these preliminaries until she was thirsting for the caress.

I heard the clink of high heels coming toward us. We coolly resumed a normal position and waited until the steps should pass our resting place. Thinking I recognized the sound of the steps, I looked out and found my wife was coming toward us, a man I had never seen before accompanying her.

"Who is that?" whispered Alice beside me.

"My wife," I answered.

As they reached a point directly in front of us, the man drew my wife toward him. She did not object.

I turned to Alice. She was watching them with an amused smile on her face.

"Who is that man?" I asked.

"My husband," she answered drolly. "The one who . . . too frequently."

As I kissed Alice I felt superior to her husband. For my wife has no dimple in her shoulder.

THE DANGEROUS AGE

By Grace Harlowe

I TELL him I adore the odour of his abominable cigarettes;
I insist that I am delighted with his ready-made clothes;
I request his opinions on politics, and ethics, and the drama;
Though his politics are inherited from his father,
Though his ethics are derived from a Y. M. C. A.,
Though his ideas about drama are procured from the moving-pictures,
I hang upon his words,
And applaud when he has made an exceptionally obvious statement.
For I am twenty-nine,
And when a woman has reached that age
She will listen to any man talk,
Provided,
He is not married,
Nor in the almshouse.

THERE is nothing more agreeable than to get credit for a virtue one does not possess. And nothing more unheard of.

THE FOOLS OF LOVE

By Marian Cox

I

TALLEYRAND'S love-affair with Madam de Stael ended with the great cynic's declaration that "One must have loved a woman of genius in order to appreciate the happiness of loving a fool." Later, when asked how a man of his mentality could love such a pasha's toy as Madame Grand, the future Madame Talleyrand, he replied: *"Elle me repose."*

The woman fool still wears her paper crown as the queen lover and breeder of the human race. As an object of selection in love and marriage, her popularity has been so great that it surely can be called to account for the paucity of genius in the female sex. The woman of genius has been unfavored by man because looked upon as a sport of the species, full of dangerous potentials of the epicene.

A world of the Epicene! How many have shuddered at the possibility when confronted by the new woman as a human being with brains. The anti-Feminists and anti-Malthusians, the Rousseaus and Don Juans and Napoleons and Popes and Obstetricians of every age—those who have had sincerely at heart the procreation of the human race—have sought to achieve its highest potency by glorification of the human fool, and of Love, as her monopoly of emotionalism.

Love, exploited thus as the business for a specialized sex, has finally become a kind of genius common to all women. The sex so often arraigned for its lack of genius in the intellectual forms finds undisputed its possession of a genius for love. Genius, with its dreams, its transports, its egotism and personalism, its power of oblivion to the rest of the world, its orgies of self-sacrifice and human victims upon Altars, its passion for surrender to something or other, Divine or Demonic, that will imbue with inspiration and creativeness the inner emptiness—this is the emotional genius of woman today.

Generalizations about the sexes have become popularized as our daily proof of a free-press. To be modern is to have one's ideas doctrinated by the school of Bernard Shaw, Freud or Ellen Key. It seems as if everything had been said at last about love and the sexes that could be said with immunity from the law: and yet there remain a few unworn generalizations to be made upon the age-old theme. For instance, it is not a commonplace of literature or social comment to note the unpopular but pregnant truth that the great psychological difference in the sexes issues solely from their opposite culture of love.

Man has been subjected exclusively to the culture of war; woman exclusively to the culture of love. A fairly platitudinous observation to make at this time, although we are only now awakening to the realization that war is, as Norman Angell calls it, the Great Illusion, and that in this world's illusion man has been cultured into his special kind of utilitarian virtues.

Similarly, woman has had Love presented to her as the Great Illusion of woman's world, for whose service she has been cultured into her special kind of utilitarian virtues. The objective served by man's training in the illusion

of war has been death, his own death voluntarily incurred as man's supreme duty and glory on earth, and the objective served by woman's training in the illusion of love has been life, her own life-giving, as woman's supreme duty and glory on earth. Thus, one can say that as faith in war has achieved the martyrdom of man, so faith in love has achieved the martyrdom of woman.

Woman has been trained to stake her all upon love; to dream and plan and wait and focus life's multitudinousness upon love's little glamour. And the inquiry is as pertinent now as ever before to ask, Is such a policy of life propitious to woman's happiness or evolution? Or, if one may not be allowed to take such a pagan view of woman's destiny, to ask, Is it essential to the happiness or evolution of man?

Once Rochefoucauld classified love, romantic, passionate love, as being "akin to ghosts of which everyone speaks but no one has ever seen." Although love is the burden of our song in all that appeals to the imagination —poetry, art, music, religion and drama—certain stringencies in civilization have so conditioned the love-life of humanity that the words of Rochefoucauld find their corroboration in the vast generality of human lives today. To be romantic is to be fated to disaster: to love is a tragedy of waste: to be loved a comedy of anachronism. Therefore it seems fortunate that love in the common experience of common humanity rarely figures as a reality.

Love has become but a dream and desire in minds free to dream and desire the unattainable. Love has become the great make believe of adult play. Love is an imaginary pirouette amidst the locksteps of realities. Love is a luxuriating in the racial cradle of temperament. Love is a cunning dipsomania carried about in public like the black bottle hugged beneath an old lady's shawl. Love is many things, and plays strange roles in the mind of humanity today; and for the indulgence of its delicate emotional calisthenics man has provided the theater and books and many other brilliant exploitations of lucrative fiction.

But love rarely comes as a reality even to her who is wholly consecrated to it, the so-called womanly woman, seeking ever in destiny the crown of love. She finds man a gamester of love, playing the game of sex with the loaded dice of his license, or finds man too sane for the romantic dream of love, too self-fulfilled for its childish mythologies of passion. Love, as woman has been made to think of it, belongs only to the realms of the transcendental or the pathological, and man as lover or husband can only disillusion, disappoint or wound her. Yet the wish has grown so strong that no individual disenchantment can break its spell, and woman pursues her quest endlessly, whether as maid, wife or widow, the quest for the divine mate for her ever mateless being.

II

Once the Italian Manzani was asked why he cut out all the love scenes from his novels. He replied: "Because I am of the opinion that one must not speak of love in a way to lead others to that passion. What we call love I think that I figure very moderately when I say that there is six hundred times more of it than is necessary for the preservation of our honorable species."

Manzani stands alone among his fellow craftsmen of fiction in his scorn of romantic love, as a pernicious overcultivation, and his belief in the necessity to cultivate the unromantic kind of love, love of humanity, in the hearts of modern men and women.

Romantic love is narrow, selfish, as prolific of the evil passions of hate, cruelty, jealousy and cupidity, the cupidity of possessing another's body and soul, as of the noble passions of self-sacrifice and service. Whereas the love of humanity brings only the noble passions, pity, chivalry, service and self-sacrifice, and has no baser metal.

But woman has been subjected to

the invidious culture of romantic love, therefore all love has become for her myth or fata Morgana, leading her on to her mental, moral, or social damnation. Until woman emancipates herself from the illusion, the *obsession* of love, no other power or suffrage on earth can liberate her mind from its age-old thralldom of the personal and petty.

The fine sense of valuation, proportion and humor is the gift of knowledge and experience to the winnowed personality. By the acrid test of such a criteria, love, as the life-force, is made to assume its proper subordination in one's thoughts and scheme of living.

Man's superiority to woman as a master of life and thought resides in his possession of this criteria. Man rids himself of the illusion of love by freedom in its experience. Man rids himself of the urge to the romance of sex in the romance of the world's great adventures. Man tests the lovelife in the balance with the communal pressure upon him and so finds its lightness. Man rids himself of love's obsession by succumbing to love's temptations. He becomes the abstainer through excesses and the healthy moralist through knowing the unhealthiness of immorality. Civilization has solved the sex problem for the male in licensing him to solve it for himself. Hence love to a man means but a casual reminder of our common human origin, to be used discreetly as a home-dose, a sort of salutary euphoria to quiet the nerves, or as an out-of-doors tonic, a temperamental spree, recurrent, amusing, laughable, even, but unmentionable.

Of all the mysteries of man's mind to woman, this is the greatest. Man's attitude of casualness, of caddishness to the love-life. For woman, denied the knowledge and experience of most of the sanifying realities of life, has lived in a subjective world of erotic make-believe. Therefore, when a woman loves it is without any of the regulative sense of valuation, proportion and humor possessed by man, so that she is apt to become the *pieuse* of love, a debauchée of the spiritual *vita sexualis*, whose mystic capers in the senses, and freak cerebration about Creed, make her appear, sooner or later, as a fool, a bore or a troublesome puzzle to the man she loves.

III

In accomplishing this culture of woman in love, there has been employed certain methods practised by the psychologist of ecclesiasticism for the transmutation of human emotion. By this time most of us know of that paradox of instinct, self-sacrifice and self-preservation, in the sex-complex of human psychology. In the light of this, one understands how the repression of sex excites the expression of self-sacrifice in the nature of a human being, and the gratifications of sex oppose the development of those qualities which rest upon the entrenched value of self-sacrifice in religious and social systems.

Thus through repressions, austerities and denials of the will-to-live the ecclesiastics have procured their fanatics, devotees and self-immolators upon the altar of the Church. And thus, too, through repressions, chastity, bans and denial of the will-to-live, woman has been made religious in her human love.

Woman in love instinctively longs to sacrifice and devote herself, to make a ritual of a kiss, and a life-long beatitude of a clasp. Even the sufferings of love have come to form part of its morbid attraction to her. She revels in the scourgings, penances, ceremonies, forgiveness of sins and symbolism of flesh and spirit in the orthodoxy of human passion. She finds her refinement of pleasure in the egoism and mysticism of the passion which the more wholesome mind of the male lover endures only for his woman's sake and would preserve only as the magic for his Titania's eyes.

And when fate frustrates her love, a woman's sacrificial sexual sense is so profoundly stirred that she turns to suicide with a facility strange in the sex remarked for its rarity of suicide

in comparison to the suicides of men. Woman's suicides are all caused by love, with the rarest exceptions. Man's suicides, so much more common, are, as invariably, caused by the loss of money or health.

The suicidal impulse is confused with the love impulse in a woman's nature, but as her lot supplies her with innumerable modes of acting out her suicidal impulse in temperamental, immaterial ways, the impulse does not often express itself in the mere physical act of selfdestruction, though woman is the self-destroyer *sui generis*. Suttee in India was abolished with the greatest difficulty owing to woman's, not man's, clinging to the custom. Our own marriage customs, it seems, have provided for subtle gratifications of woman's suicidal impulse in love, in making her give up her name, fortune, identity, selfhood in its myriad of ways, when she marries.

And she has elaborated upon the traditional sacrifice by finding many other things to surrender when she marries. The musician generally gives up her music "just because" she marries, the artist her painting, and so on. Woman's everyday suicides of body or brain, for the sake of love, her self-oblations upon altars of human relationships in which she gives all for nothing like a rapt saint, results from that transcendental abjectness of her innermost being which is the psychological state of creatures leading an unnatural life, the cloistered, the sacrosanct and the hallucinated.

IV

THE conduct peculiar to woman at every stage of her existence upon the globe can be explained by the one thing: her love of man. In many ways it seems as if *to love* were the exclusive prerogative of the female sex, the biological imperative of the feminine nature alone. For in spite of nature's penalty of burden and pain for the female in love, and in spite of society's edicts and penalties of loss of substance or character for the female in love, woman has continued to live only for love and to give all for love, like a creature devoid of every vestige of the self-preservative instinct.

For man's love woman has paid every price exacted from body, brain or soul. She has mated and has bred according to the laws laid down for her by man. She has accepted her state of love or maternity as dishonored when man has pronounced it dishonored or as glorified when man pronounced it glorified. For the sake of love she has posed as soulless when man fancied the soulless woman, as brainless when man courted the brainless woman, and, in living up to his various ideals, has even feigned to be without the vitals of humanity, as when man admired and made the proper thing in morals and manners, the virgin-mother, the passive female and the fainting lady.

One might think the preservation of the species sufficiently guaranteed by the blind incorrigibility of the child-bearing sex towards love and mating, as established in the length of human history; yet civilisation has added very extraneous incitement to the biological imperative of the feminine being. Woman's livelihood, place, power, her whole world of values has been made to depend upon her possession of mere man, as though to create in woman's nature, by every power and artifice, a frenzy of Anthropolatry and Andromania.

The female's emotional culture has ended in making it more essential, as a fulfilment of her nature, *to* love than to be loved. Another reversion of pristine rôles. Without either an object reciprocity or opportunity for her loving, woman seems able to sustain all the dynamics of love in her spirit and thought; which can only be explained by the modern aphrodisiacal atmosphere that never permits a woman to forget the englamoured origin of the human race.

Woman's contemporary license for leisure makes her the chief victim of

the veiled play of the arts upon the passion. Man, the drab-worker preoccupied by the mastery of environment, has left woman to become the loafer and inviter of her soul. She is the matinée fiend, movie-fan, music lover, magazine-supplement-reader, poetry-dabbler, tango-dancer, tea-monger and scandal-scenter in society. Fashionable society, whose favorite diversion has always been the blood-hounding of the culprits of love.

This daily wallowing of woman in a subjective sensationalism has pampered her appetite for emotions until it is virtually impossible to discover a woman, of our best society, who has any ambition in life save the imponderable one for those ultimates of emotion and sensation said to exist in a *grande passion* of love.

Woman has thought about love so much that it has given her gout of the brain. She has indulged her sentimentality about love with such excess that it has given her fatty degeneration of the heart. Love has become woman's Olympian madness, her sublimated folly, her voluptuousness of self-destruction—and now that the modern male, in the vast majority, has become scarce, ineligible, celibate or unattractive—her lonely pursuit has become something febrile and neurasthenic and full of desolate ardors like a seeking for God.

V

Already the woman as pursuer and wooer of man has conventionalized itself as one of the signs of the times in Shavian and other realistic fiction.

Man's increasing emancipation from love and woman has forced a large number of women into the business world and produced that much-discussed phenomenon, the economically independent woman. But when in the business world, woman performs her work there as one would serve a term under duress with the secret proviso of abandoning it the moment she finds "love" upon which to plant the remainder of her existence. According to the dream and desire, love grants to woman a magna charta of do-nothingness, a nirvana of the inert, so that one longs for it most intensely when one gets the sense of oneself as tired, driven or misplaced.

In the existence of the well-to-do maidens and matrons, love acts with its different imperative. To them love means simply adventure, thrills, excitement and danger. And this is an atmosphere so congenial to the high-strung American woman that, once having lived in it, she is forever possessed by its nostalgia. It becomes the dark flower, the haunting sweetness of her bouquetless days. It drives her into her whirl of senseless activities, and gives a reason for her endless self-bedizenment, self-culture and self-advertisement, and for her amazing waste of life in the social game of meeting people. "To meet people," that appears to be the grand and total object of a society woman's life. She endures boredom unspeakable in what seems the meaningless process of meeting people, new people, more people, the world of irrelevant people, at teas, receptions, meetings, lectures,—the little Mandarin!—so, restless and insatiable in her sublimal quest for the one glorified male who is imbued with the power to emparadise the blanks of a woman's existence and to uplift her soul from the sodden to the winged.

In the doting faith that a man can become an object for a life-long exercise of emotionalism, all types and classes of women in all sorts and kinds of ways, have made their art the pursuit of the male. The busy, elusive, self-contained male, deluged with invitations "to meet people," in meaningless congregations, deluged with offers of exotic cultivations of emotion in the slipknot ties of platonic friendships, soul-mates or light-o'-loves, from that arch-donor and vender of self—woman.

Haeckel once said that the severest shock a human constitution could stand was to discover one's own uselessness. This shock is coming to many women

today. It is responsible for the exaggerated popularity of Feminism and Red Cross Nursing, for woman's belated schools of Culture, and her other variety of attempts to justify her existence by new intellectual or philanthropic feats.

The uselessness of her loving feat is becoming more and more clear to the enlightened woman. The child has outgrown it, as once directed upon him, the episodic child whom it has become unhygienic to kiss. And man no longer desires, admires nor needs it directed upon him. The fainting lady of mid-Victorian days was evolved by masculine taste, and she was as surely cured of her fainting feat by a change in masculine taste. The loving woman of the twentieth century resembles her fainting sister of former times in being an over-engined supply to a limited demand of man.

VI

Love was once nature's great missionary. It served as the means of understanding and reconciliation between the sexes. Love was once a sort of Esperanto of the senses which enabled two mute foreigners to become intelligible to each other. But that was before the comradeship of the sexes was evolved as one of the graces of our civilization. Nowadays a man and woman find each other in friendship and lose each other in love. The love-nature so differently cultivated in the sexes has finally made of love their chief source of misunderstanding, disillusion and enmity.

Love makes its votaries wretched beings whose souls are not within their own keeping. Therefore man demands to be free to love in order to become cured of love and woman demands to be free to love in order to live for love: and herein the calamitous disparity.

Man's derision of the epicene, his antipathy to the sexless, his fears of the "unwomanly," in their possibilities of development in the female, would lead one to suppose that a man's personal welfare and happiness wholly depended upon the contingency of a woman's love being freely and fully bestowed and concentrated upon him. If that has ever been the case with the old-fashioned male, it is far from being so today. For the first wisdom a woman gains from a love-affair is that the quickest and surest way to lose a lover is to love him the way he longs to be loved. Love is the one thing no normal man really wants from a woman. He wants her consent or loyalty to his love or passion, but her own love-passion terrifies and drives him away as though with some atavic memory of the female's erotic anthropophagy. Something in the deepest recesses of man's being still remembers, shudderingly, the embrace of the female spider.

"Horrible angel of devotion," once murmured the much-tried Heine to the ministrations of his loving Matilde. The penalty of life-long marriage and support upon the chainless lightning of love, the sordid capitalizing of love in law, breach of promise, alienation suits and divorce, with their public exposures of the secrets of love and marriage—have inspired the modern male with a canny prejudice against the specialized emotions of women. Love has even appeared in the Courts of 1916 as a plea of man in justification of his increasing crime of wife-desertion. One, William Custer of New Haven, Conn., arrested at South River, N. Y., a few months ago, on the charge of deserting his wife, pleaded effectively in court that his wife was "loving him to death." There must be many subtle and complex causes, psychologic, social and economic, for the evident and growing objection of the male to becoming the recipient of a woman's *grande passion*. The only types of manhood who honestly hanker for the experience are the adolescent, the paranoiac and the unlovable. Take the ordinary seasoned male person, especially when uncommonly attractive or distinguished, and it will be found that he is so closely pursued by the ubiquitous

Anthropolatress or Aphrodisiac that sooner or later there is aroused in his nature the *horror feminæ* of decadents, sages and priests.

When Talleyrand turned from Madam de Staël to find happiness in the love of the fool, he was doubtless inspired by the desire to escape from being loved with the *grande passion* of the woman of genius. For, after all, love is but the smallest concentration of the biggest forces of the brain; imagination, aspiration, ideality, making love's poetry of the senses; therefore the more dynamic the intellect the more highly sexed the nature of man or woman. The Sapphos and the Heloises of every age, the women of genius and of the highest culture of their time have gone down in history as famed for their unhappy fates as the *grande amoureuse* as for their achievements in the world's work.

"There is in me," said George Sand, "nothing strong save the need of loving." George Eliot, of whom it was said that her man's intellect had unsexed her, confessed herself as being a creature wholly dependent upon the affections, "needing upholding, encouraging, petting, comforting, all the time."

Sonia Kavalevskaya, a woman scientist awarded the Bordin prize of the Academy of Sciences in France, and for whom was predicted a career of invaluable contributions to science, died while still in her youth, of a "broken heart." The dying words of this woman of genius, who had achieved success and fame in her work and a foremost place in the world, were a lament that she had "had everything in life except the one thing needful—love!"

A few years ago the love affair of Madam Curie, acclaimed as the greatest genius of her sex, and Professor Langevan stirred the public of two continents with a scandalized incredulity. Mary Wollstonecraft, called the manhater because of her prehistoric principles of feminism, was wrecked in mind and body by her hapless passion for the philanderer Imlay as completely as any little Midenette who loves not wisely but too well.

Julie de Lespinesse affords another example of intemperate womanliness. Dowered with every gift of mind and social power and with a personality that could "make marble feel and matter think," this famed Mademoiselle valued herself so cheaply that she left nothing to the world except a few pathetic love-letters to the coxcomb that broke her heart.

America has produced notably few women of the first rank in letters and the arts, but among the few there is Margaret Fuller, woman-genius and illustrious failure, who admitted her longings for love as being above all her intellectual ambitions and uttered the wail so reminiscent of the interminable wails of Marie Bashkirtshev for the divine passion:

"I shall always reign through the intellect. But the life! Oh, my God, Shall that never be sweet!"

Life and Literature are teeming with such instances which one might cite *ad infinitum* in revealing the super-lovingness of the super-woman, who is thus, after all, only the super-fool.

PRACTICALLY all the interest in modern fiction is maintained through the contemplation of the efforts of some gentleman to work his wicked will upon some lady in an eminently artistic manner. Practically all the interest in modern life is maintained through the contemplation of the efforts of some lady to work her wicked will upon some gentleman in an eminently artistic manner.

WANDERER

By John McClure

THE little windows of the town
They twinkle warm with light;
The little windows of the town
Are all awake tonight,

And kindly men and women
Sit snug within and tell
Wide-eyed little children
Of heaven and of hell,

Queer tales of stubborn Peter
And David and Lord God,
Till the weary little children
Sigh sleepily and nod.

They told such stories also
To me when I was small,
Of Moses and the good God,
Jehosophat and Saul.

But I think not of Moses
Nor yet of Lord God,
Treading to the world's end
The long high-road.

AD INFINITUM

By Helen Trask

I

HE smiled at every woman . . .
She laughed.

II

He smiled at one woman . . .
She wept.

THE MYSTERIOUS MRS. CARDEN

By Thyra Samter Winslow

WHEN it was rumored that Blair Carden was engaged to be married and when his marriage was actually announced, his friends looked forward with a sort of feverish interest to meeting his bride.

He married a girl he had met in Paris. Of course, that was expected. Blair Carden had never cared for the ordinary sorts of girls his friends married. He could have had almost any of them. As the men of Blair's set married, each felt, outside of the natural conceit that he had been the chosen of the world, that, if Blair had called first, even in a whisper, he would have been answered by the Only Girl. Blair didn't call. He was nice to everyone, with a sort of lazy nonchalance. He accepted invitations as if he were granting favours and extended invitations as if they were commands. And his friends liked it.

There was Peggy Day, now safely married to Buddy Richment. Peggy had money and charm and was well-born, and yet, when Blair Carden whistled, she followed. She married Buddy and his millions only when Blair ceased whistling. Blair had almost everything, too, except money. He was almost too handsome and had a sparkling wit and a charming indifference.

And Blair Carden was married and he was coming back to New York with his bride! What would his wife look like? Would she pose? Or giggle? Would she be superior and sarcastic? Would she snub or patronize? Everyone waited.

Blair's friends saw her first in the Gilberts' box at the opera. She was of medium height but looked tall because she was very slender. Her hair was drawn back almost too severely, that is, it would have been too severe for most women. The women who saw her had to acknowledge that her features were perfect enough to stand it. Her hair was black and her face was a pale, creamy white, a satiny texture. She had no color at all, except her lips, which were quite red. Her eyes and lashes were dark.

The next week, she was the pet morsel of conversation. It was Peggy Richment who threw the first bomb.

"She doesn't powder!" said Peggy.

"You don't mean it, Peg! Her complexion can't be real! The way it is! It sounds incredible!" Marian Torrens spoke in her usual staccatos.

"It's a new preparation, I suppose. Something she got in Paris. She's one of these sophisticated ones. I know." The kind speaker was little Dot Timberly. Little Dot took out her own wee vanity and added a bit more rouge to her lips and a tiny touch to an eyebrow, as she spoke. The girls were at luncheon.

"I looked close," said Peg. "I know. I've used powder since my first year at boarding school, when I was fourteen and I've used rouge since the year after and millions of brands of both since—all that all of you have raved about. I know every powder and rouge in every combination. You can't fool me. I hate to admit it, but Mrs. Carden's face is her own and her first name is Ruth!"

"I can believe the first name," said Teddy Raynor, and she added a bit of powder, "but not the complexion. Look at all of us. We've all powdered, just

since you spoke. No powder! It sounds like indecent exposure. I saw the wonderful Mrs. Carden but her skin looked too good to be natural."

"I was close," said Peg.

Little Dot reached for more cakes.

"You are all such believers," she said, "Imagine Blair, after knowing us—and the others he has gone with—going in for unsophistication. His wife isn't the Simple Maiden type. I saw her yesterday in the Wellsby car. She was wonderfully gowned. Her complexion did look marvelous. Of course she uses some perfectly wonderful preparation that is hard to get and expensive and all that. And we poor simple little fish fall for it."

"It may be," said Peg, "but—and this is honestly the truth—I saw her wipe off her face with her handkerchief!"

"Little believer!" said Marian. "Why, that's probably the greatest trick of the make-up—and you accepted it so easily. You'll never learn, Peggie!"

But, if Peggie didn't learn at first, she tried hard to learn with the others, as the months passed. It was hard not to be fooled by Mrs. Carden. She seemed always doing something that there was some question about. Everything she did seemed quite simple and yet to have a carefully-thought-out motive. Every woman she met attributed deep plans to her actions.

Was it by accident that she pretended to like children and was caught playing tag with the two small Van Trumbly boys, just as Mrs. Van Trumbly, who, for some unknown reason really seemed fond of her children, happened to come out on the lawn? And Mrs. Van Trumbly had just declared, publicly, that the new generation bored her and she could find nothing in them. Of course, she took up Ruth Carden after that and made a great pet of her and introduced her to really important people who were doing things.

And, of course, it was just nothing at all, that at a house party at the Martens, Ruth grew interested in the library that no one else looked at and confided to old Mr. Marten, whom the guests noticed less than the books, that, at the convent, near Paris, there were so few books she was ever allowed to read. And old Mr. Marten talked about books to her and she went to her room with a couple tucked under her arm and then the Martens grew terribly rich and included the Cardens in a wonderful Southern trip and things like that. Of course, that wasn't just cleverness!

Before long, everyone attributed almost mystical powers to young Mrs. Carden. She snubbed the Russian seer and then he turned out to be a huge fraud just when everyone was making the greatest fuss over him.

"There's something mysterious about her," little Dot exclaimed a dozen times and after closely "watching her work," as the young men tactlessly put it, the rest of the crowd agreed with Dot that Ruth Carden was, well, rather—mysterious. She seemed so simple! That was the base of it. The Cardens had a tiny apartment in town and a bit of a house in the country—most of their friends had more—and yet, though there was no pretence about them, they seemed elusive, unexplainable.

Ruth's clothes seemed simple, yet their simplicity spelled Paris and high prices. How could she afford it? It was mere pretence, of course, the greatest of posing, when, one afternoon, instead of knitting, Ruth Carden brought a sheer blouse to sew on, saying, "Oh, I make a lot of my own things. You see, I learned to sew in the convent."

Pretty clever? But not quite clever enough, perhaps. You can't completely hoodwink New York young women with a too-simple explanation.

And Ruth Carden blushed a rosy red at sex conversations and pretended to be dreadfully embarrassed and angry when Bobby Lathrop tried to kiss her —and Bobby kissed everyone. And she was kind to old ladies of no particular importance, saw that they had comfortable chairs and even talked to them. Oh, she was a deep one!

And then, quite suddenly, the crowd saw no more of Ruth Carden. There

was no herald of her disappearance. She just disappeared. They saw Blair, occasionally, and tried to ask, unconcernedly, after his wife.

"She's quite well," he told everyone. "Still out in the country. Loves it out there. Went out a bit too much this winter, I'm afraid. Now, she's having a long rest."

"A long rest," indeed! Where was the mysterious Mrs. Carden? Ronald Taylor and Marian and Dot motored out to the country house, as an embassy after information. They reported that the maid received them and then Blair came in and said Ruth had a headache and begged to be excused. A headache!

"We stayed for three hours," said Dot, "and not a sound did we hear. I said my face needed powdering and went to Ruth Carden's room—the maid wanted to show me to one of the guest rooms but I wouldn't be put off—and her room wasn't occupied—and I didn't see any signs that it had been, either. Not even a single toilet thing nor a slipper. Where is Ruth Carden?"

Blair found out the rumor about the bedroom and let drop, casually, that Ruth had moved into the large guest room as it was lighter. Only the most credulous believes even listened to him.

There was a mystery about it. Mrs. Carden had disappeared. That much was simple. But where was she? Had she eloped? Had she returned to Paris? Perhaps she had had a mysterious past that had pursued her to America and compelled her to return. Perhaps an old lover had taken her away. Perhaps—humiliating thought—she couldn't stand the simplicity of the New York set to which she had been introduced. It was dreadful, anyhow.

Everyone sympathized with Blair, especially the women he had not cared about. It was so dear and brave of him to try to act as if everything was all right. It was so decent of him to hurry out to the little country house, under the pretence that Mrs. Carden was waiting for him. No wonder he looked rather white, with all this hanging over him.

Blair must have taken Mrs. Van Trumbly into the secret. For, to keep up the pretence that Ruth was "resting in the country house," Mrs. Van herself, and sometimes one of the little boys, would go out for a day or two. Peggy questioned the littlest Van Trumbly.

"Yes'm," he answered. "Mother and I was, I mean were, out there and Mother did a lot of knitting and made out some committee lists. No'm there wasn't anybody there at all. Mrs. Carden? No'm, oh, I mean yes'm, she was there. I got to play, now. Fred's got the Chow and he'll take him away if I don't hurry."

The boy had evidently been coached and had nearly forgotten what to say! It was most mysterious.

It would explain so many things, the girls decided, when the truth came out—if it ever did. Beginning with the powder and ending with—just everything. If Ruth Carden ever did come back, if any explanation was forthcoming, they'd have something definite to work on, anyhow. They'd know how to ticket her. It would be better than this uncertainty.

The truth came out, finally. It came out through the mails and to all of them at once and it answered most of the questions. It didn't seem fair—after the beautiful wall of mystery. It seemed quite like cheating. For in the mails came the announcement of the arrival of Blair Carden, second. The mysterious Mrs. Carden had had a baby!

JUDGING FROM THE FACTS

By W. R. Cassatt

"YOU are as false as your complexion," I said, looking as though she had trampled upon my most sacred ideals.

She was pleased.

"I cannot trust you, I cannot believe you, I can only love you," I said, forcing a look of anguish into my eyes.

She radiated happiness.

"You are as fascinating as Madame du Barry, as lovely as Helen of Troy, as appealing as a gin-ricky in August," I said, trying to appear as though my heart was crumbling.

She actually purred with self-satisfaction.

"Even though," I continued, "even though your feet *are* husky, I still love you."

She assassinated me with a stare.

"You don't talk like you love me," she snapped.

THE CRITIC

By Margaret Cory Wells

THE young artist asked the critic to view his work.

It was a sculpture of two nudes: a man kissing a woman on the brow. It was called "Love."

"That is not a true conception of 'Love'," said the critic.

"The woman is my wife," said the young artist. "I kiss her like that.'

The critic smiled.

"That is not a true conception of 'Love'," he said. . . .

He had just come from the beautiful wife of the young artist.

MARRIAGE is like the red light on the back of an automobile: it shows up your number.

WHEN GREEK MEETS GREEK

By Maverick Terrell

THOSE CONCERNED:

SHE, delightfully feminine, with a suspicion of dare; still youngish.
HE, interestingly masculine, with same dare; not too old.

TIME:

To eat.

SCENE:

One of those "favorite tables" on the left, well back, as you enter Tortoni's, which, as you know, is just around the corner from the justly famous Court Theater in Charlotte Square, in dear old ——; well, somewhere in Europe, if you please.

SHE is seated at this table, which is almost hidden from the over-curious, apparently ready to fall to. Need I add she is dressed in the minute of fashion, with a charm that is both foreign and undeniable.

HE, having shelled his coat, gloves, hat and cane, is looking about the crowded room, full of gnashing diners and crowded tables. His better eye falls for the moment on the "favorite table" neatly adorned by milady. Being a man of some taste and education, the idea of somehow dining at the same table ranges in the male bird's mind. He calls the maître d'hôtel over, oils his itching palm, and whispers something into his eager ear. That functionary shakes his head, after looking toward the table, mentally estimating the tip-worth of milady's charms. He, knowing the same sliding scale, promptly oils again and the maître d'hôtel graciously glides him over to the table and with a mumble says something to milady. Her answer, with slightly arched eyebrows and a coolness, is lost as he, bowing cavalierly, sits down.

HE

(*Trying to get over the awkward situation.*) Awfully crowded to-night. Tortoni's is getting too common—only table left, you know. Impossible to sit anywhere else—comfortably. (*This last as an opening gun.*) Jolly little place this. (*There is a lull which, to the male bird, seems quite lengthy, and a certain distinct aloofness to milady's manner.*) Awfully good play at the Court to-night. Y'know I always enjoy Barrieshaw. Wonderful wit. He writes so cleverly to stupid people and so stupidly to clever people that I never can make him out. The weather is good, isn't it.

[*All this time he has been trying to look the lady in the face without appearing to be other than a gentleman, which is a very difficult trick to do. She, meantime, has ventured one look, true to her sex, of estimate, of her vis-a-vis, which hasn't escaped him. Her waiter approaches with something assumed to be food.*]

SHE

(*To the waiter.*) I have no soup spoon.

HE

(*Before the waiter can do anything.*) Beg pardon, if you will permit me, take mine—from a complete stranger, of course. (*Bows elaborately.*)

SHE

(*Looking at him as though she were looking through a plate-glass window, and at the same time taking a spoon from the waiter and ignoring the man's.*) Of course. Thanks. (*This last to the waiter.*)

HE

By the way, Waiter, suppose you bring me something to eat. That's what I'm here for, presumably. (*Looking at her; she colors cleverly.*)

SHE

I beg your pardon, this is my waiter.

HE

Oh, excuse me. I'll get another, the room is full of 'em. Here, *Garçon, viens ici.* Sounds so much better in French—here. (*Another waiter approaches and starts the gentleman on his epicurean journey. There is another slight lull until, accidentally, Mr. Male Bird upsets his salt holder.*) Jove! That's too bad! I'm very sorry! Means a quarrel. Rotten luck!

SHE

Don't mention it. (*In turning away, ditto accidentally over with the pepper box with a sweep of milady's arm. He sneezes.*) Oh, I'm so sorry. That's my fault.

HE

Why mention it? I'd sneeze for you any day.

SHE

(*Laughs good-naturedly.*) You're incorrigible. Now that I have noticed you, I suppose you're happy.

HE

Umm, but I'm greedy. Y'know I thought you were dumb when I first came in. Still, it was a sort of a liberty to—to—to—

SHE

To force yourself upon me? Well, the harm's done. Was it expensive?

HE

Not for this table. Haven't I seen you somewhere else before?

SHE

(*Laughs.*) I expected something original from you.

HE

Seriously. Your face strikes me as familiar.

SHE

Oh, hardly as bad as that!

HE

Well, we've met somewhere before, I'm quite sure. If we haven't it wasn't my fault.

SHE

(*To waiter.*) No, I don't care for game.

HE

Anything personal?

SHE

That's for you to find out. Do you know, I really think I have seen you somewhere before.

HE

(*Hopefully.*) Yes, of course. Shore!

SHE

Aren't you an official of some sort? A railroad guard? Or a bobby?

HE

Crushed to earth! Say, let's have some wine. You certainly deserve a toast.

SHE

Thank you, I'm never drunk—in public.

HE

Of course, awfully awkward, complete stranger and all that sort of rot. When you know me better you'll drink more.

SHE

Strikes me that you've gained ground rapidly, even for Tortoni's.

HE

Oh, I don't blame you, seriously. One has to be careful these days in Europe.

SHE

(*Becomes serious; lowers her voice.*) I don't quite understand. You mean—?

HE

So many, shall we say, international ferrets about. Spies, pardon the word. [*All this while the two waiters are plugging along with their various tid-bits.*]

SHE

Oh.

HE

Just what I was going to say, eh—what? Now it comes to me. Haven't I seen you in—Vienna? (*She looks at him sharply.*) Somewhere on the Schiller-platz?

SHE

What gave you that idea, of all places?

HE

Ah, that manner, that charm, unmistakable. Yes, Viennese, quite shore.

SHE

Haven't I seen *you* in St. Petersburg —I beg your pardon, Petrograd. You Russians have changed it, haven't you?

HE

Sh, not so loud! What a silly idea; I'm not Russian. It's the caviare in my expression.

SHE

Perhaps I am mistaken. Could it have been Berlin where I saw you? You know there is a Schiller-platz there, too.

HE

Berlin? Oh, yes, there was one, once. Oh, I've been in Berlin. I've been in Petrograd quite frequently.

SHE

And I in Vienna, often.

HE

How do you like the English?

SHE

How do you?

HE

What a charming time we're having, so original, and with the goose too (*looking down at dish*)—I think it's goose.

SHE

Which one?

HE

Score three. Have you been in Holland recently?

SHE

Holland?

HE

Yes, Rotterdam for instance, the Café Fritschy, on the Geldersche Kade.

SHE

Never heard of the place in my life. Don't believe there is one. I don't remember it and I've been in Rotterdam often.

HE

Hm.

SHE

I didn't quite catch?

HE

Neither did I, evidently.

SHE

(*Laughs.*) Why blame me? You said it was quite dangerous to be friendly with strangers nowadays, in Europe.

HE

Well, some strangers, yes. Did it

strike you that we're not getting anywhere?

SHE

Is there any necessity?

HE

(*Looking at her corsage bouquet.*) What wonderful flowers! Forget-me-nots?

SHE

I accept the dare. You can have one from the bunch.

HE

I much prefer the original.

SHE

(*Starts to unpin corsage bouquet and pricks her finger severely. She speaks before she thinks.*) Shucks!

HE

(*Quickly.*) I knew it! You're an American. You can't deny it! Not after that word.

SHE

Sure. Kalamazoo, Mich.

HE

Shake, kid. I'm from Oshkosh, Wis. Say, let's go out and get something to eat!

INTERLUDE

By Mary Drake Goelet

LIFE is drab and colourless.
The glint of moonlight on still water is not beautiful; the laugh of a child is not merry; the fragrance of roses is not sweet; the sunlight is not cheerful; the cool wind is not refreshing.
I seek the cold solitude of deserted beaches and lonely woods.
I wear dark colours and listen to plaintive music.
My rooms are sombre.
I do not sing.
All the day I weep. . . .
I am no longer in love.

HEY, CA' THRO'

By James Proctor McKenzie

THE grey moon is my brother,
And we ha' tales to tell,
And we make rhymes for butter.
And we make songs to sell.

If you will give us pennies
We will sit and sing
Silly songs to please you
Every evening.

THE BROADWAY DRAMATIC CRITICISM

By George Jean Nathan

THE business of dramatic criticism, as expounded by the majority of our daily journals, is vigorously maintained to be less an affidavit of the adventures of a soul among masterpieces than the admirations of a soul among potboilers. One of the typical professors of this academy is the gentleman who signs himself Alan Dale, and into the esoteric metaphysics of the craft this Mr. Dale has lately vouchsafed the curious a luculent peep.

For thirty years, this gentleman, with minor divergence, has fought fearlessly, courageously, and beyond power of threat or bribe, the battles of bad taste and mediocrity. With all the skill at his command he has addressed himself assiduously and with infrequent failure to the cultivation of the public's cheapest and most doggerel theatrical predilections. He has rarely sidestepped, rarely swerved, rarely faltered. No play might be so good that his slapstick was not zealously poised to explode a torpedo of low comedy against its trouser-seat; no play so bad that his syringe was not perched betimes to spray it with muscadine adjectives and cologned scare-marks. With the fine fervour of the believer in some holy cause, he has often stood far into the night before his mirror to compose his thumb at just the proper angle to his nose that his public in the morning might learn how sufficiently to deprecate such a writer as Hauptmann or Shaw or Galsworthy. And with a fervour not less ardent, he has synchronously sweated, with the sweat of a Mozart transcribing Allegri, over a dressing-room interview with some Casino houri that his public might appreciate exactly how much she loved her Spitz dog. Rare the young American writer of authentic promise who has not been airily waved away by Dale, and equally rare the young American player of authentic promise who has not been helped and encouraged, if a man, with the amiable reminder that his ears stuck out too much or, if a woman, with a polite wheeze on the similarity of her blonde hair to spaghetti. And even rarer still such young and sincerely striving organizations as the Washington Square Players that have not, at christening, been sprinkled with lordly and quipful pooh-poohs.

For thirty years this Mr. Dale has been tiptoeing up behind the drama and devilishly tipping its hat down over its eyes and pulling theatrical doorbells and tying tins to pedigreed tails and doubling up the bed-sheets and putting raisins on the fly-paper. And this cutting-up he has negotiated not in the sound spirit of a good healthy boy, but in the spirit of some kittenish Abigail, some sciatical papa larking with the youngsters on an eternal Allhallow-e'en. His comedy, on such occasions, has been not the light and lettered humour that coats the best of criticism nor yet the higher wit that sharpens it and forces it fully home, nor even yet the broad, robustious humour that at times best suits the appraisal of lowly things, but the sort of humour rather that proceeds from the comparison of something or other with a Limburger cheese or from some such observation as

"'Way Down Yeast' ought to get a rise out of everybody." The sort of humour, in short, whose stock company has been made up largely of bad puns, the spelling of girl as "gell," the surrounding of every fourth word with quotation marks, such bits as "legs—er, oh I *beg* your pahdon—I *should* say 'limbs'," a frequent allusion to prunes and to pinochle, and an employment of such terms as "scrumptious" and "bong-tong."

In view of the manner in which Mr. Dale has over this long period conducted himself, in view of his shave-parlour jocosity and yokel affections of arbitership and apparent insensibility to the finer things of the American theater, a considerable portion of even that humble West Forty-second Street audience at which his writings, and writings of a piece with his, are aimed, has been prone to regard him as one of the usual mirthless Andrews who, slightly to adapt Dr. Johnson, have taken up reviewing plays as a profession by which they may grow important and formidable at very small expense. Wherefore, picture the surprise of this Broadway element, the same element that has—and not improperly—at times barred Mr. Dale, the play reviewer, from its theaters, when this same Mr. Dale, turned playwright, discloses a play from his own hand, and a first play, that is seen in the main to be not only an intelligent, well-written and dignified piece of work, but, to boot, a play for the most part superior to the majority of Broadway-made *opera* which for three decades he has been reviewing. The conclusions, plainly enough, are two: either that Mr. Dale in his profession of play reviewer has for thirty years been selling his birthright for a mess of ashcan notoriety, or that the case of Mr. Dale establishes once more the fact that it is ever infinitely a more difficult thing to write good dramatic criticism than to write good drama. And of these conclusions, it is the second that at the moment intrigues me the more.

The unfortunate thing about this second conclusion is that, while it is perfectly sound, it has yet about it the pert aspect of silly paradox, an aspect which brings it skeptically to be smiled away and generally to be doubted as are doubted such equally sound, if superficially as dubious, conclusions that it is infinitely more tiring to watch a one-ring circus than a two-ring circus and that a cigar which tastes sweet in the shadow tastes bitter immediately one steps into the sunlight. And yet its integrity is not difficult of appraisal. In the history of the theater and dramatic literature, how many the names of dramatic critics that, in comparison with the names of mere dramatists, have survived time? Think of more than a dozen or so, from Aristotle to Archer, if you can! For every hundred men who have succeeded in writing good drama you will be at pains to discover a single one who has succeeded in writing good dramatic criticism. And the ratio becomes all the more impressive when one considers that where one man tries to write drama a hundred men try to write criticism.

Criticism, for all the notable spicy epigrams to the contrary, plainly calls upon a vastly higher series of attainments and accomplishments than playwriting. To write a single first-rate play, a man needs but to have observed and assimilated a single mood and phase of life and but the imaginative writing skill to present that single mood and phase of life in terms sufficiently of the theater to make it sympathetically understandable to a variable number of first-rate persons grouped together in a single body. To write this fine play, the man need necessarily have no professional knowledge of what is precisely known as dramatic technique, and no experience and practise in its maneuvering, as witness, in example, the case in embryo of Dunsany or the case of Dr. Schnitzler or the case of John Galsworthy. Or, on a lower but nonetheless still authentic level, the case of the London typist who wrote the play called "Chains,"

the case of the Welsh lad who wrote "Change," and the data of several of the young Irish group. Further, to write this single memorable play, the man need not necessarily be widely traveled, widely read, deeply and broadly educated; he may indeed be as a sitter in a far and lonely tower and the play but the transcript of a single adventuring into the outer world. As witness the record of the remote and humble genius of a day, as Hastings alludes to him, who gave forth "Pathelin" and faded then from the earth But to write a single piece of living, first-rate criticism of a first-rate play, a man must have within his grasp the sweep of all the literatures and all the traditions of all the stages of the world. This one piece of first-rate criticism must automatically be builded upon what remains of the man's findings from all the first-rate criticism that has gone before, and it must, if it would survive, be superior to such prevenient criticism. Anyone may copy Brunetière and die the next day unknown. To live on, one must improve on him and advance him.

Dramatic criticism, unlike dramatic composition, demands without exception a knowledge of all drama, all human nature. It may not, like drama, concern itself alone with an imaginative or photographic unit; it must be all-embracing, all-comprehensive. The writing of a "Romeo and Juliet" requires a very great genius; but the writing of a criticism of a "Romeo and Juliet" that shall endure as the play endures, requires clearly a greater genius still. . . . Dryden, by his own confession, found his critical "Essay of Dramatic Poesy" a vastly more difficult labour than his drama "All For Love." Pinero has written some excellent plays, but his serious attempts at dramatic criticism have been less than negligible.

Again, the dramatist, even in his appeal to souls of the highest understanding, enjoys an obvious and distinct advantage over the critic in that he makes his appeal to these persons in groups, that is to say, when they are members of an organized crowd in a theater, subject to that confounding condition which our friend Le Bon describes as the collective mind and emotionalism, and so to a considerable degree vacated of individuality, mentality and clarity of perception. The critic, to the contrary, not only tackles these souls of the highest understanding singly, one by one, but he tackles them, to boot, after their opinions on the drama in point have been more or less violently coloured in one direction or another through the group contagion above alluded to. Thus, where the dramatist deals directly with an audience automatically already half within his grip, and ready and eager to be impressed, the critic, on the other hand, deals indirectly with an audience automatically already half-way out of his grip, and indifferent and reluctant to be impressed. The dramatist tilts easily against human nature's softest spot, to wit, the emotions; the critic desperately against the toughest, to wit, the intellect.

Here, of course, I speak of the real criticism. But, dropping ten thousand stories to the Broadway species of "criticism," one still finds that, even on this lowly plane, what is true on the superior plane is here possibly also true. I say possibly, for I am at once sadly uninterested in and happily ignorant of both phases of this latter business, of both the Broadway criticism and the manufacture of the Broadway yokel-yanker, and so hesitate to present my opinions on either in too positive a manner. However, let us, for example in inquiry, take Mr. Dale's own case. Mr. Dale, in his play, "The Madonna of the Future," has written, as I have already noted, a piece very much above the Broadway general. It discloses a sense of style, a consistently polished manner, a feeling for word and phrase; its theme is viewed through the glasses of a man possessed of a certain pleasant measure of cultural background and expounded in well thought out and effective vein; its net impression is of a piece of writing de-

signed by a civilized gentleman for a civilized audience. But turn now to the playwright's review of his own play, a criticism—it is surely fair to assume—he pondered carefully and executed with the best of cunning and skill at his beck. What does one find in this criticism? One finds, to put it mildly, not only nothing by way of genuine criticism, but absolutely nothing that would indicate its penman to have the remotest accurate notion about the merits and demerits of his own play or about the mould of drama with which it is in species identified or about the manner of dramatic writing which it negotiates or about even those perfectly patent elements in the popular drama out of whose womb certain of its own elements have been brought to life.

A single point in Mr. Dale's review of his play is amply illuminative of Mr. Dale's nescience as a play reviewer and will suffice to reveal the character of what precedes and follows. "I am going to credit myself," writes Mr. Dale, in his review, "with a new idea—an idea up to the very moment—an idea that may seem shocking and startling—to those who like to be shocked and startled—but one that is being rushed along on the breeze of this portentous today. Has a woman, who has wealth, position, brilliant notions on the subject of bringing up a son to be a credit to his country—has this woman a right to become a mother without marriage, if she does not care for the idea of marriage and looks on it as superfluous?"

Aside from the somewhat peculiar literary complexion of the paragraph—and in passing observe, please, its solemn seriousness—what of it so far as it affords insight into Mr. Dale's equipment as a play reviewer, a reviewer of even the plays of Tin-Pot Alley? What of this amazing idea which Mr. Dale announces, with a warm self-congratulatory shake of the hand, to be "new," "up to the very moment," "shocking" and "startling"? Ellen Key? Even Mr. Dale, further along in his personal *éloge*, reluctantly allows that the old girl toyed with it in her remote day. But old ideas, in all fairness, seem often new ideas when they are spread out upon the stage, and what of Mr. Dale's new, up-to-the-very-moment idea so far as is concerned the contemporary stage about which surely he ought, as a play reviewer, know? Has Mr. Dale forgotten the exposition of "Man and Superman" and the scene between Violet and Tanner and the latter's "They know you are right in their hearts, though they think themselves bound to blame you by their silly superstitions about morality and propriety and so forth. But I know, and the whole world really knows, though it dare not say so, that you were right to follow your instinct (i.e. to have a baby); that vitality and bravery are the greatest qualities a woman can have, and motherhood her solemn initiation into womanhood; and that the fact of your not being legally married matters not one scrap either to your own worth or to our real regard for you"? And much the same business in the same dramatist's subsequent "Getting Married"? And much the same business, in more solemn vein, in certain ironical passages of Schmidtbonn's "Help! A Child Has Fallen From Heaven!" . . . And what of the al fresco fulminations of the Michaelis who stems from Key? . . . Mr. Dale's new idea, he should in sooth know, is approximately as new as the idea of Stanley Houghton's "Hindle Wakes," which idea, unless I am much mistaken, Mr. Dale in his capacity of play reviewer held similarly to be "up-to-the-very-moment," "startling," et cetera, when the idea had already been done theatrically to death by David Graham Phillips in his play "The Worth of a Woman," and by Max Dreyer in "The Pastor's Daughter of Streladorf," and by Alfred Capus in "The Wounded Bird," and by Hjalmar Bergstrom in "Karen Borneman," and numerous others.

If meritorious plays like Mr. Dale's "Madonna of the Future" fail to prosper in the American theater as feeble and empty plays like "The Lion and the

Mouse" and "Common Clay" richly prosper, it is to no little degree, and by way of boomerang, the fault of such play reviewers to the American public as Mr. Dale. That these newspaper commentators have a wide influence on popular taste is as futile a denial as would be a disbelief in newspaper influence itself. And that they many of them debase this influence and that they many of them thereby grossly debase the popular taste by cadeting to that taste, but makes to defer on end the happier day when our theater shall prefer the gentlemanly wit and humour of a play like Mr. Dale's to the cheap gutter badinage of certain other easily recalled plays which Mr. Dale has fulsomely recommended to the public.

II

Some twenty years ago, Mr. John Drew had a valet who, as valets will, was given to an exuberant craving for the various magnificences of his master's wardrobe and who, as valets also will, was given further to periodic covert sportings of these fine feathers when his master's eye was elsewhere. In especial was the valet's heart intrigued by a pair of boots of an almost Ethiopian splendour and these exotic brogans he would now and again slyly borrow for purposes of grand promenade. Dressing for the play one evening and searching in vain for the lovely galoshes, Drew chanced a glance at his valet's feet and thereon beholding them gave free vent to his ire. To this ire, the valet listened for a few moments in silence and then bending down to remove the unblest leathers, lightly rejoined, "To hell with you! Go on take your old shoes! I'm through valeting you. It's too hard work. I'm going out and be an actor and *what's more,* I'm going to be a damned sight better one than you are!"

"And the funny part of it," amiably agrees Mr. Drew, "is that that is exactly what he did."

The valet's name was Arnold Daly.

This Daly is today doubtless the foremost actor on the American stage. To watch him is to be almost persuaded that there may after all be something approaching to an art in the business of performing a dramatic role, that acting may after all call on somewhat higher qualifications than a well-modulated speaking voice, a decent dress-coat and amorous eyelashes. It is said by certain of Daly's admirers that he is the actor he is because he is an intelligent man; but this, of course, is merely the stereotyped nonsense ever exuded when an actor reveals himself superior to the lack-lustre generality of his fellows. Intelligence is no more essential to a good actor than it is essential to a good sculptor or a good Pullman porter. It is no more necessary that Mr. Daly be able to distinguish between Pascal of Clermont-Ferrand and Pascal of the Marigny or between Euclid's axiom of parallels and the Malthusian doctrine than it is necessary for me to be able to distinguish between Cherryola rouge and Exovia paste or to know how to take a headlong dive out of a stage window after the manner of Don Cézar de Bazan without breaking my neck.

Daly, I thoroughly believe, is the best actor amongst us for the reason that if he is in sooth an intelligent man he has the good sound actor-sense to forget the fact the moment he passes into the stage door. Thus, where certain of his competitors, possessing a modicum of intelligence, cannot resist the vanity of parading that modicum upon the stage, to the all too obvious embarrassment of the already perfectly thought out work of the author, Mr. Daly, with his superior intelligence, sees the humour of his confrères' peafowlish carrying of cinders to Newcastle, appreciates that intelligence is the business of the dramatist and humility before that intelligence the business of the actor, and so makes of himself the most genuinely intelligent and fully praiseworthy actor in our entire theater. When Mr. Daly walks upon the stage, an audience may rest secure

in the knowledge that what it is about to visualize is not an actor's idea of an author's play, but an author's idea of an author's play. The distilling of the author's spirit from the play, about which our friend Copeau talks so much and does so little, has been the quiet and invariable, and eminently successful, practice of Daly ever since I can remember. I am not a writer of plays, but were I, this Daly would be the first actor to whom I should like to entrust my work. If there was anything at all worth while in that work, I should feel pretty certain that Daly would be the actor properly to get it out for me.

A certain unwelcome skepticism as to Mr. Daly's intelligence however presents itself in connection with his production of Hermann Bahr's "Josephine." The making over of the composition for the English-speaking stage, Mr. Daly put into the hands of one who so distorted the pattern and dialogic pungency that what remained was less Bahr than shoddy Louis N. Parker. Even with such distortions, "Josephine" is of course a much more interesting play than the majority of things one is called upon to engage in a local theatrical season, for it at least divulges a subject viewed through the eyes of an artist as against the promiscuous predicate viewed through the eyes of a hack. Yet what a matter for regret, in view of the scarcity of plays worth an ear, that Mr. Daly failed the sagacity to leave the original manuscript intact.

Not the least piquant thing concerned with the presentation of the play was the review of it brewed in the columns of *The Evening Sun* by my professor-colleague, M. Rathbun. Concluded this amiable gentleman, "Altogether, 'Josephine' is a success on its literary, artistic and histrionic sides, but as a real, honest-to-God play it is a failure." To the first one of my readers able satisfactorily to explain to me how a play that is a literary, artistic and histrionic success may at the same time be a failure as a real and (if one may quote our Hazlitt) honest-to-God play, I shall present a year's subscription to *The Evening Sun* and a handsome triple-lens reading glass.

III

A THEATRICAL piece by Mr. and Mrs. Frederic Hatton ever suggests a French play written in Chicago. Invariably selecting themes distinctly Gallic, the Hattons with equal regularity select treatments distinctly galline. That this selection of treatment is, however, involuntary, that it proceeds automatically from the collaborators' shortcomings, is apparent to anyone who has passed an eye over their various labours. Breathlessly pursuing the elusive *double entente* and attempting a flying leap to the step of its caboose, the Hattons are forever missing and landing with a loud bump upon their joint sit-spot. But such is the patent unshakable determination of the good souls and so great their ardour to be the Chicago Caillavet and de Flers, that a rub on the sore place and they are forever once again up and at it. Does a *double entente* perch upon the window sill of their chamber and chirp, and the Hattons are out of bed at a jump and off to the pantry after the salt-shaker. Does a *double entente* show its head over the underbrush and the Hattons dash wildly to the edge of the lake and set sailing a decoy duck to lure it within range. But nary a genuine *double entente* falls into their clutches. For what they capture, when capture anything they do, is less a *double entente* than a raw smoking-car wheeze, a gross jape, a traveling salesman's *mot*. And, further, not a ribald *plaisanterie* swaggering unashamed in its ribaldry, and so open to no charge of leer or hypocrisy, but rather something that gives one the impression of smut in a kimono, of dirt grinning at one from behind a screen and crooking its finger. The *double entente* of such Frenchmen as Feydeau and Picard such Italians as Bracco, such Germans as Adolf Paul and Thoma, and such an American as Avery Hopwood is to

be bred not, as the Hattons believe, merely by crossing smut with cologne, but by the infinitely more difficult trick of crossing wit with literary skill. *Double entente* is not, as the Hattons present it, an obstetrician in a dress suit; it is a well-bred young woman in negligée.

The most recent effort of the playmakers in point bears the title, "The Indestructible Wife" and reveals a theme (that of a young woman whose excessive vitality makes wreck of every one who comes into contact with her, and the means by which she is cured) at once fresh and admirably suited to farce comedy; but the complete ineptitude of the authors devastates the enterprise of everything save cheap bawdry.

IV

One has only to compare Mr. Harry James Smith's "The Little Teacher" with Alfred Capus' "The Little Postmistress" to sense (1) the difference between the tastes of an American and a French playwright, and (2) the difference between the tastes of an American and a French theater audience. I doubt whether in the dramatic literatures of the two nations there are two plays, of whatever quality, that may more exactly illuminate the respective postures of these nations in their playhouse. Both plays proceed from the adventures of a spotless virgin come to earn a livelihood in a small village and each play in its subsequent progress pronounces clearly, and at every turn, the stereotyped characteristics of the audience for which it was designed. The Capus' play is a brightly written, sophisticated, good-natured and droll comedy of live and living persons. The Smith play is an amalgam of all the mildewed hokums of the Broadway showshop expounded through the figures of all the mildewed puppets of the one-night-stand opera houses. This Smith work is, indeed, a veritable *tour de force* in the so-called sure-fire devices that are ever successful in the *diteggiatura* of the keyboard of the native playgoing yokel's emotions and the pawing out of his moods *doloroso, infervorato, vivace con furioso* and *f. quanto possibile,* a *tour de force* in the jazbos and old reliables of stage commerce that has not been matched for sheer virtuosity since George M. Cohan's "Hit-the-Trail Holliday." (It is to be noted in passing that Mr. Cohan is one of the producers of the Smith play.)

The story of the play is the autobiography of the brazen popularity stratagems of the American stage. The picture of George Washington decorated with American flags, the picture of Woodrow Wilson beside it, drawings of the Star Spangled Banner upon the blackboard by the school children with coloured chalks, the creeping down the stairs of a small tot in its little white nightie, the sprig of Spring blossoms which the heroine gives to the hero and which the hero tenderly presses in a book for sweet memory's sake, the drunken father who beats his children until the purple welts show on their backs, the twain of sour old maiden ladies who seek to stir up the community against the little school teacher because they believe her relations with the hero are not so innocent as they seem, the uncouth but noble lumberjack to whom the little school teacher teaches the A. B. C.'s and with whom she falls in love, the head of the village school board whose bandanna sticks out of the tails of his coat, the heroine's wistful playing of the organ in the candle-light with the children in their nighties cuddling beside her—the organ that hasn't been played, it's nigh on thirty years now, sence the baby died . . . they are all here. And with them, the village beau in the loud red vest who wets his fingers and creases his trousers, the hero who fells with a blow the knave who casts an aspersion upon the little school teacher's fair name, the kettle of boiling water with the real steam coming out of it, the joke about Jersey City, the discovery that the ill-used children

were kidnapped from their cradles and are in reality the heirs of a rich New York family, the comic old rube who goes on talking forgetting that he has a lighted match in his hand and so burns his fingers, the hero who says "damn" and then, when the heroine raises her eyebrows, elaborately begs her pardon, the pale little girl child who observes pathetically that she "never had no muvver," the longing to be back again in "wonderful little old New York," the final vision of the hero in khaki ready to sail for France . . . . and you have, in small part, an idea of the night's indubious traffic.

When one sees "The Little Teacher," one sees synchronously the history of our American popular stage. It is a vaudeville of American audiences since 1850 and, as such, the best unintentional satire I have ever seen.

V

THE simple truth of the success of a music show is that it may be appraised in the degree that it caters discreetly to wickedness. And—"What is your idea of a wicked man?" inquires Illingworth in "A Woman of No Importance." "One who admires innocence," responds the Lady. Thus, the music show that most adroitly capitalizes innocence is the music show that most prosperously serves its ends. And thus, the music shows produced in the Princess Theater generally excel in this particular direction. The producers of these shows appreciate that the polite display of a single young girl in a modest frock that reaches to the ankles is of a politic *agacerie* that may not be approached even remotely by twenty veteran spear-carriers in strip tights, and that the display of a mere half dozen such modest *puellae* is a spectacle of a magnetic quality that cannot be equaled by the fleshing-clad ghosts of all the belles of all the Carl Rosa Opera Companies, Al Reeves Beauty Shows, David Henderson Extravaganza troupes and George Lederer revues that ever stalked the boards. The well-known Ziegfeld scheme of emphasizing innocence by bringing it into violent impact with its opposite—as, for example, in the instance of the little Fairbanks girls in the last version of the "Follies"—is frequently imitated, and successfully, by the Princess entrepreneurs; and the result is a theatrical evening usually found to be more than eminently satisfactory by gentlemen who probably have not the faintest idea as to the real reason why it is they have found it thus satisfactory. The latest agreeable show is called "Oh, Lady, Lady," and is the work of the dexterous Messrs. Bolton, Wodehouse and Kern. Mr. Wodehouse's lyrics are the best he has yet composed.

VI

POSTSCRIPTS. "Sinbad," the latest and best of the Winter Garden exhibitions, with the eminent Professor Jolson as master of the slapstick. "The Off Chance," by R. C. Carton, a comedy of belated humours and *passé* situations offering the pleasant Miss Ethel Barrymore in a rôle resembling a mash of Lady Algy de "Lord and Lady Algy" and Lady Isabel de "East Lynne." "The Copperhead," by Augustus Thomas from a story by Frederic Landis, a stagey and rather deliberate composition on the subject of patriotism; Mr. Lionel Barrymore presenting an able performance of the central rôle.

ERREUR N'EST PAS COMPTE

By Jean Vallier

—En ce temps là, conta l'éminent écrivain Jérôme Piquois, je fus bombardé chef des informations et du grand reportage à l'*Eclaireur* de Bouzin-la-Bataille: 75 francs par mois et l'apéritif deux fois par semaine en la société du rédac-chef. Une place de tout repos, comme on voit.

Justement, pour mes débuts, une occasion magnifique de faire briller mes talents m'offrait son cheveu: le comice agricole allait avoir lieu au chef-lieu de canton. Ayant saisi ledit cheveu et ma bonne plume de Tolède, je rédigeai de cette fête un mémorable compte-rendu dans un style élevé idoine à particulièrement charmer les populations patriotiques et agricoles.

Ma modestie ne m'empêchera pas de vous en réciter quelques extraits.

Dès l'aube, de multicolores banderoles de calicot blanc traversaient gaiement les rues de la coquette cité, clamant à tous les échos: "Vivent nos invités! Salut à nos porcheries modèles!" A midi, un fastueux banquet réunissait les notabilités et les lauréats autour des plats succulents dus à la science hautement culinaire du maître-queux Polyphème Pipe, bien connu des nombreux habitués du Lion de Zinc, ce confortable hôtel où l'on trouve des water-closets à tous les étages et des tripes à la mode de Caen tous les mercredis. . . . La plus franche cordialité ne cessa de régner d'un bout à l'autre de ce repas digne du regretté Balthazar. Au dessert, l'éminent M. Labarbe, en un toast ému qui rappelait les plus beaux jours de Cicéron et de Gambetta, fit l'éloge des races ovine, bovine et porcine et des vaillantes populations du canton. . . . La fête de gymnastique avait attiré sept mille personnes. Quatorze mille mains battirent en l'honneur de nos audacieux gymnastes. . . . A ce moment la fanfare municipale attaqua, sans qu'ils pussent se défendre, les plus beaux morceaux de son répertoire. L'enthousiasme était à son comble. Quatorze mille pieds scandaient en cadence la célèbre *Marche de Sambre-et-Meuse,* qui conduisit maintes fois les volontaires de la Convention à la victoire d'Austerlitz. . . ."

Deux jours après la publication de cet article enflammé, je décachetais de nombreuses lettres de félicitations et je respirais l'encens de la gloire, quand, soudain, d'une quelconque missive parut se dégager un relent de vinaigre. Un correspondant, qui signait Laferme (quelque pseudonyme, sans doute), m'écrivait:

"Monsieur, vous êtes assurément un grand écrivain, mais vous êtes un reporter inexact et un pauvre mathématicien. . . . Je faisais partie des sept mille spectateurs de la fête de gymnastique. Or, j'ai l'honneur d'être manchot; par suite, il n'y avait au maximum que neuf mille neuf cent quatre-vingt-dix-neuf mains pour applaudir, à supposer encore qu'avec mon unique main je me sois tapé sur la cuisse. De plus, j'étais placé à côté d'un homme amputé d'une jambe; il n'y avait donc pas quatorze mille pieds pour rythmer la *Marche de Sambre-et-Meuse,* à moins, peut-être, que vous ne vous soyez compté vous-même pour une unité supplémentaire. . . ."

Et, ce jour-là, je ne lus pas plus avant.

BUSINESS

By H. L. Mencken

I

OF E. W. HOWE, the Kansas *littérateur*, I have often discoursed from this stump, and usually in terms approaching the encomiastic. To be a Kansan and a *littérateur* is in itself a feat of respectable intricacy and derring-do; the man who harnessed a sheep and a hyena scarcely performed a more amazing. Literature regards Kansas as a desert swarming with Knights of Pythias, and Kansas regards literature as peopled with men too lazy to do honest work and women no better than they should be. And yet this Howe survives the miscegenation and flourishes withal—and without abating any essential ingredient of either character. On the literary side he has achieved a novel that more than once lifts itself to brilliant merit, and a book of epigrams that is full of sardonic waggery, and several volumes of travel that are among the most savoury in the language, and many short things that will not down; and on the Kansan side, despite the lure of strange coasts and the bozart, he maintains his congenital integrity almost unbroken, holding patriotically that rum is a viper, that boneset tea has more virtues than the whole pharmacopœia, that women who smoke should be registered and licensed by the police, that *Ayers' Almanac* is better reading than "Marius the Epicurean," that the *Saturday Evening Post* is the world's greatest periodical, that a ten-acre field of alfalfa is worth all the fugues ever written, and that what the country needs is not less Puritanism, but more.

Two things, however, differentiate this sound and prancing Kansan from all the other Kansans, and so make him a sort of super-Kansan. One is the fact that he is fluently articulate—that he has mastered the trick of putting his ideas into graceful and intriguing American—that he has a fine instinctive cunning for arranging nouns, adjectives, verbs, adverbs, pronouns, prepositions, conjunctions and participles in caressing sequences. The other is that he is an absolutely honest man—perhaps the only one in Kansas, surely one of the few in the whole United States Our Presbyterian culture, as everyone knows, makes for many laudable qualities: enterprise, industry, philoprogenitiveness, patriotism, respect for God and His agents, a desire to get to heaven, a great discretion in the orgiastic department. But one of the things it does *not* make for is that austere intellectual passion which exalts a bald fact above even the revelation of God; one of the things it does *not* promote is plain honesty. The American, indeed, always views the truth gingerly, particularly if it is the truth about himself; he seems convinced that it is dangerous, and perhaps downright indecent. There is in him none of the Slav's talent for meticulous and merciless introspection, none of the Frenchman's penetrating realism, none of the Nameless Ones' gift for putting the obvious into terms of the appalling. In his philosophizing he roams the superficial, leaping back blushingly every time his foot unearths the fundamental. And for his daily uses he has to master two distinct sets of politics, economics, gnosiology and

ethics—the one that meets his complex and exigeant notion of propriety, and the one that works.

This curious fear of the plain and horrible truth (for the truth is essentially horrible: it almost always does discredit to everyone concerned) is perhaps one of the factors at the bottom of the national antipathy to alcohol, now become so evident. The chief effect of alcohol, socially considered, is not that it converts a man's liver into linoleum and condemns 22 per cent. of his children to dementia præcox, but that it loosens his tongue and makes a babbler of him—in brief, that it breaks down all his habitual pruderies and causes him to speak his secret mind. This synthetic frankness, as everyone knows, is esteemed by the Russians; they have a low view of the authentic human soul, and enjoy seeing it unmasked. But among a people so sentimental as the Americans it inevitably makes for intolerable scandals. A Methodist deacon, watered from an ordinary horse-trough, can easily maintain that appearance of arctic rectitude which meets the national theory as to what is nice; he is, to the naked eye, but little differentiated from an archangel. But the same deacon, his inhibitions scattered by a pint of Bourbon, at once reveals the fact that he is a devious fellow, a peeper at cuties, a sinner behind the door, perhaps even an actual heretic and mammal. Hence he is against the Bourbon, and his friends who would have suspicion thrown upon them by his unmasking are also against it, and so, by an easy process, opposition to it permeates the whole community.

All this, however, is beside the point. The business before us is not to explore the psychology of prohibition, but to say grace over Howe de Kansas, a man so peculiarly constituted that he achieves all the virtues of being drunk while remaining cold sober. That is to say, he is of such curious and unnational cut that, without drugging or appreciable effort, he can throw off all the usual burden of taboos and equivocations, and speak out boldly what is in his secret heart. Moreover, that heart is not black with foreign poisons, but snow-white with the national virtue. Howe, as I have said, is a Kansan, an American from the midlands, the most thoroughly American American imaginable. The result is that his confidences, so boldly uttered, take on what might be called a touch of universality—that the judicious may gather from them, not only what Howe himself honestly thinks of this or that, but also what the great bulk of his fellow-citizens think of this or that. When he throws overboard his own cautions and conventions he also throws overboard the national cautions and conventions, and what remains is an instructive revelation of the esoteric doctrine upon which the daily life of the republic is actually based, and by virtue of which it has survived in the struggle for existence, and attained to a security that is surely not to be sniffed at. Thus by the fortuitous duality of this E. W. Howe—the biologists would call him a mutant, or sport—we are enabled to get some light upon the larger dualism of our incomparable nation.

In January, reviewing a book of his with the banal title of "Success Easier Than Failure," I exposed some of his ideas, *e.g.*, that intelligent self-interest is the only honest human motive, that getting money promotes it and is thus virtuous, that any man who fails at the effort deserves the penalties that go therewith, that idealists who protest against the fact are chiefly mountebanks with quack remedies to sell. These doctrines were platitudinous enough; every sane man must have an inner sense of their essential verity; most of them have been voiced often by professional heretics. Yet for a respectable American to put them into cold type was a strange business, and so Dr. Howe's book attracted a great deal of notice—almost as much, in fact, as Mark Twain's posthumous "What Is Man?" which the New York *Times* denounced as too harsh to be accepted as genuine. Now comes Howe with

another indiscretion, to wit, a small volume called "The Blessing of Business." In it he plunges full tilt into the orthodox doctrine that business is a form of crime, bearable only when it is rigidly controlled by the devices of professional politicians and uplifters. In place of that orthodox doctrine he preaches the secret doctrine of every normal American: that business is actually the grandest, noblest and gaudiest of all the arts, that success in business is the surest test of human merit, that its uses are higher than any other uses, that its great heroes are the flower of the race. In other words, he rejects the official idealism of the nation and deduces a philosophy from its actual practise—and then erects a materialistic idealism upon it. Business before pleasure; *ergo*, business is superior to pleasure. First comes manufacturing, hawking, trafficking, money-making. Then comes the feathering of the nest: "founding a home, a family, assisting in building a school, a road, a street." "Finally"—note that I quote literally—"finally, appreciation of a painting, a book, a sermon, or a poem."

Well, why not? True enough, it does violence to the tenderer feelings, but it has the pragmatic sanction, it works! On this theory a great nation has been founded, and a great people have come to growth. Bred in heathenry, and corrupted later on by exotic lasciviousness, I find myself, at the threshold of senility, leaning to softer, more levantine ideas. That the late Phil Armour was a greater man than Beethoven, or even than Mendelssohn, or even than Puccini—this I doubt. That Quaker Oats do more credit to a just God than Schubert's Unfinished symphony, or even than "Künstler Leben"—this I deny outright. But all the same the Howe contention shakes me up. Reading his austere periods, I lose some of my old lofty disdain of stock-brokers, bank directors, haberdashers, delicatessen dealers and other such *ignobiles*. The business of their devotion is full of petty lies—but what of theology? It is full of transparent frauds—but what of painting? It has its accidental successes, its numskulls enthroned—but what of literature? It is polluted by infernal scoundrels—but what of statecraft, medicine, above all, journalism? In brief, is business actually a thing of special swinishness, or is its swinishness merely a function of its humanness—and of the inarticulateness of its professors? The opposition has all the orators; the business man is too busy embalming his beef, fixing his scales and dodging his taxes to have any time or talent left for the forensic arts. *Feræ naturæ* in the domain of ideas, and fair game for all who envy him, and hate him and are experts in moral indignation, he has always lacked champions to ease and gild his necessary rascalities in a world of rascals. Well, now he has a champion. More, the national soul has an interpreter. The Kansas Origen, defending him, has laid the foundation stones of a new and more honest national philosophy.

II

Crime, it would be appear, is contagious. On the heels of Howe, with his iconoclastic effort to blow away blather and get at what folks actually believe, comes a doctor of philosophy, nay, a downright *privatdozent*, with a book devoted largely to the same immoral enterprise. His name is Will Durant and his volume is entitled "Philosophy and the Social Problem" (*Macmillan*). Ostensibly a learned work, and full of quotations from Socrates, Plato, Spinoza, Bacon and other such half-fabulous monsters of sagacity, and with a Greek motto on its title page, it is actually a sharp and devastating attack upon much of the fustian that now passes for official doctrine in the United States, particularly in the fields of ethics, politics and sociology. In the very first chapter I find altruism under the hammer, and the sparks fly upward almost as startlingly as in "What Is Man?" And then the "good" man is put to the torture, and the old theo-

logical sanctions behind him are denounced as "superstitions," and the country is solemnly warned that it must renounce balderdash and get down to the hard facts, or face a future heavy with perils. I have never read a more surprising piece of writing. I invaded it in the full expectation of passing a placid hour in a decorous seminary; I came out of it at the end with my hair on fire. It was as if the Rev. Henry Van Dyke had sent me a sequence of sonnets in praise of Rabelais, almost as if Major General Roosevelt had declared for the Bolsheviki. Moreover, to the surprise was added an element of sensuous enjoyment: the learned heretic, it appeared, wielded a slippery pen, and could pile up phrases with great skill, and knew a juicy word from a stale one, and had in him a certain fine intellectual resilience and audacity.

In brief, this Opus I is a book of rare tang and vivacity, an oasis in the wilderness of academic pishposh. But still with a plain enough hallmark upon it, still not wholly free from the gentle madness of the birchman. First the philosophical doctor shows the imbecility of the national dealing with the social problem, and then he exposes with great deftness the quackishness of all the sure cures so far proposed. But then, just as one is expecting him to finish with some master heresy that will make all the rest seem pale, he draws out of his bosom a sure cure of his own—and it is worse than any he has disposed of. And what is it? In essence, that a commission of *intelligentsia* be apppointed to restudy the problem from the bottom up, setting aside all existing axioms and turning their backs upon all exploded theories —and that the chief places on this commission be given to college professors! In other words, send for the quacks to abolish quackery! What a sad *coda* to a brisk and stimulating book! In Goddes' name, haven't we suffered from college professors enough? Don't they man all the brummagem commissions, foundations and other such sanhedrins that already exist, thus forestalling Dr. Durant's scheme—and proving, by the banality of their grand discoveries and pronunciamentos, its inherent absurdity and inevitable collapse? What could be more ridiculous, in fact, than this belief in the efficacy of boards, this exploded theory that two fools are less foolish than one, and three less than two, and so on? . . . I propose a new edition, with the Remedy left out. It is as bad as Herr Most's, or Henry George's, or young John D.'s, or Tom Lawson's. In place of it, let us have more of such lively stuff as is in the earlier chapters. . . .

A third book of disconcerting plain-speaking, this time a very thin one: "The Nemesis of Mediocrity," by Ralph Adams Cram, Litt.D., LL.D., the architect of St. Thomas' Church, and hence a man entitled to respect (*Jones*). Dr. Cram displays himself in an almost Berserker rage; he is hot for a revolution and observes blood upon the moon. The trouble with the world, as he sees it, is that mobocracy, the love child of democracy, has made war upon all its finer spirits and reduced civilization to sordidness and stupidity. The race flounders through the greatest conflict in history without first-rate leaders and will emerge from the shambles in the midst of chaos. True democracy, he says, must be re-established on the ruins, even if it takes another war to achieve the business. Unluckily, Dr. Cram is a bit obscure in two important places. On the one hand he neglects to tell us how this later war is to produce first-rate leaders, considering how egregiously the present one has failed; and on the other hand he doesn't differentiate very clearly between what he describes vaguely as true democracy and what the rest of us would probably mistake for oligarchy. Perhaps he will go into the matter more exhaustively in another book. This one is scarcely more than a pamphlet. It leans heavily upon Emile Faguet's "The Cult of Incompetence" and in more than one place upon Houston Stewart Chamberlain, but it has a vigor

that is all its own, and is altogether a brisk and earnest piece of work.

III

THE aforesaid Howe, in a late issue of his monthly paper, heaped praises upon a book called "The Story of a Common Soldier," by Judge Leander Stilwell, of Erie, Kansas, a remote outpost in the saleratus and hog cholera belt. After great difficulties my agents in Kansas City located the town, waited upon the judge and procured a copy of the work. I have since read it with the utmost pleasure. It is a modest and excellent composition, a chronicle of war without any of the customary strutting and bawling in it. Judge Stilwell served in the Union Army for four years, and saw some of the most savage fighting of the Civil War, but lie nowhere hints that the event of Appomattox was due to his personal butcheries, nor does he expose the strategical imbecilities of the generals he fought under, nor does he describe or discuss any battle at which he was not present, nor does he pile on the rhetoric in describing the battles he actually saw. In brief, a war book of a quite unusual sort, and an effective antidote to the gorgeous tomes which now burden the book-counters. More, it is done in plain, straightforward American, naked and unashamed.

The learned jurist, now a hearty ancient of 73, went into the war a boy of 18. His home was in the jungle of southwestern Illinois and his whole service was spent as a member of Company D, 61st Illinois Infantry, a regiment raised by countrymen, and officered and manned by countrymen from first to last. Stilwell enlisted as a private, was made a corporal at the end of his training, and a good while later, after bearing himself creditably in the field, was promoted to sergeant He remained a sergeant until near the end. Then, with the Confederacy in collapse and the war practically over, some of the officers of the regiment retired and he was made a second lieutenant and finally a first lieutenant. This was the full extent of his promotions. He came home with a sword over his shoulder, but he had never drawn it in battle. All his fighting had been done with a musket and in the ranks.

The 61st Illinois was at Shiloh and fought through the first day, but was held in reserve thereafter. Stilwell describes what he saw, and then shuts down; the battle, as he depicts it, was merely a small affair in the woods. But what a thrill he gets into that brief scene with his arctic, almost biblical phrases! One sees the row of plowboys in their first, dismayed surprise; one hears the appalling slambang of it; one feels them stagger and fall back; one almost smells them in their swift, sweaty retreat. And then the retirement to the river, and the long wait by the water while Buell's divisions landed from the steamboats and clawed their way up into the woods, and forty bands played "The Girl I Left Behind Me." The picture jumps and jiggers like a moving picture film. It is full of brilliant flashes, little episodes that stick in the mind. No better writing could be imagined.

The 61st was before Vicksburg, but never near enough to look down into the city. The judge does not lie about it; he doesn't pretend that he was nearer than he was; he doesn't tell how his eagle eye laid a 42-centimetre gun and shot off the campanile of the First Methodist Church; he mentions no wading in blood. What one actually gets from him is a dramatic vision of vast tumults on the horizon, of a gigantic battle sense from afar. Occasionally a shell came near—but no one paid much attention to shells. The main business was to find something to eat, and especially something better than the salt-horse and Yankee beans of the army. One fairly tastes those beans toward the close. They are mentioned on every page—perhaps two hundred times. General Grant is mentioned but twice.

Another capital chapter describes an obscure and petty battle on the railroad

below Murfreesboro, Tenn.—a battle so small that the history books probably do not mention it at all. But for Sergeant Stilwell it was the wildest combat of the whole war, and so he goes into it in detail, and makes it extraordinarily vivid. The 61st had been told off to guard a supply train, and the Confederates ambushed train and regiment in the woods. There followed a brisk fight in the night, and following the fight a disorderly retreat along the railroad tracks. The men floundered through thickets and country streams, lost and calling to one another. Their officers took to the woods, were driven out, fell wounded in the ditch along the track. The fat colonel, winded by his colossal sprinting, rolled over like an ox and was pounced upon by the yelling rebels. Altogether, a shocking and lamentable affair — and here set down superbly.

So to the end. One gets a constant feeling of reality; no mere artfulness could contrive it. Nor is all the good writing in the battle scenes. The last scene of all, the war done, is one of the best managed in the book. Here we see the return of the veteran of 22, now proudly embellished with the shoulder-straps of an officer. Discharged at Springfield, after a long wait for his money, he makes his way to the little village nearest his home, his coat off, his sword shouldered like a musket. His expectations are not concealed; he has gallantly served his country; he glances about for signs of welcome. But no such signs appear. A yokel in the village store gapes at him idly but does not hail him; a house-dog barks as he passes on; that is all. "Discharged soldiers were now numerous and common, and no longer a novelty." Two hours later he is helping his father to cut and shock the corn.

I commend this little volume to your kind attention.

IV

VARIOUS volumes of literary criticism now invite. In "Some Modern Belgian Writers," by G. Turquet-Milnes (*McBride*), there is a somewhat stodgy but none the less informing and useful account of such men as Verhaeren, Lemonnier, Rodenbach, Eekhoud and the Destrées, with their curious blend of French and German cultures. In "Poe," by Hanns Heinz Ewers (*Huebsch*), there is an eloquent pæan to the poet by a German who has borrowed much from him, including especially his *héliogabalisme*. In "On Contemporary Literature," by Stuart Pratt Sherman (*Holt*), there is an elaborate statement of the pedagogic view of literature, to wit, that its aim is to inculcate virtue. In "Books and Persons," by Arnold Bennett (*Doran*), there is a capital collection of critical paragraphs first written for the London *New Age*, slight in structure and pretension but nevertheless full of sound judgments and shrewd reflections. Ewers and Bennett both gain something by the fact that they are not professional critics; in each there is not only special knowledge, but also a complete freedom from that dogmatism which goes with the habitual pronouncing of verdicts. Ewers' little book on Poe is a mere sketch, but into it he has packed a vast passion of admiration—a passion, indeed, that often grows almost lyrical. A few errors stand out. He says, for example, that Poe was "a scholar who possessed an almost universal education." Nothing could be more untrue. Poe was never a scholar; his ignorance was as marked as his genius; even Griswold was probably a more learned man. Again, Ewers says that Poe's grave in Baltimore is without a gravestone. This is also wrong. There is, in fact, a gravestone in the best Père Lachaise manner, with a portrait medallion of the poet by a talented Baltimore stonecutter, and on January 19 of every year it is hung with a wreath by the Junior Order of United American Mechanics. No; Poe is not neglected in Baltimore. Every school-boy down there has heard of him, and knows that, next to the late Joe Gans, he ranks most precious among Baltimore's dead. . . . It would

be a pleasure to see more criticism by Dr. Ewers. He is an artist of force and originality.

Bennett, like Wells, and most of the other younger English novelists, was thrown off his feet by the great shock of the war, and since 1914 he has printed nothing worthy of being mentioned in the same breath with his earlier work. But though he has thus shown what might be called a negative decline, he has surely not gone to pot in the positive manner of Wells, whose demoralization has been so great that he has sought refuge in religion. It is, indeed, quite impossible to imagine Bennett writing anything quite so idiotic as "The Soul of a Bishop" and "God the Invisible King"; such sentimental braying is simply not in him; if he cannot write sense, he has at least enough control of his emotions to keep silent. "Books and Men" goes back to the days before the war. The book, indeed, was finished in 1911, and its present appearance is not due to Bennett's initiative, but to that of Hugh Walpole. As I have said, it is capital stuff—lively, penetrating, original, malicious, and often not a little profound. There is no solemn statement of literary principles; if you want to get at the man's central ideas you must deduce them for yourself. But for all that, his discussion of the chief problems of contemporary letters is full of stimulation. You will not read his denunciation of publishers without gathering some of his own high dudgeon; you will not follow his attack upon what he calls the mandarins of criticism without picking up some of his earnest conviction that they are infernal nuisances.

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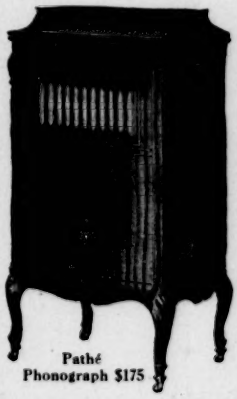

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